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J. Marshall

THE
GLANVILLE FAMILY.

BY
A LADY OF RANK.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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THE
GLANVILLE FAMILY.

CHAPTER I.

Kind, and true-hearted, bold, and gay, and gallant,
But lacking one especial thing, discretion—
What is to him the base and sordid gold,
When hawk, or hound, or beauty lead him on.

Old Play.

“YOU have no humanity, Ellen,” said Edward Glanville to his sister, half raising himself from the sofa on which he was stretched;—“you have not common feeling,—nobody ever has, for my troubles. I will bear it no longer. I tell you

I am in the mood for mischief. Take that embroidery frame out of the way, or I shall put my foot through it."

"Oh! for mercy's sake! do any thing but that," said Ellen, a gay laughing girl of fifteen; "it is Elizabeth's. Now, Edward dear, be quiet, and tell me what is the matter."

"Very well, child; come here, and you shall hear all about it; bring a chair for yourself close by me, only take care, for your life, not to disturb my attitude. Do not move the article of furniture which supports my left leg."

"Now, Edward, do not run on so, but tell me, can I do any thing to help you?"

"Any thing! yes, every thing; only just get me a hunter."

"A hunter! oh, Edward! and where in the wide world am I to get you a hunter?"

"There are six in the stables, doing nothing but eating their heads off; and my father—you

will scarcely believe it, Ellen—but my father has never thought of offering me one, though three several times at breakfast this morning I thanked Heaven audibly that the frost was gone, and that the hounds met at Hornsey. Some people have no consideration. I almost think he said something of younger sons, and expensive habits. But this moping life will never do—my spirits will not stand it. I will go back to Brighton and my own hunters to-morrow.”

“Your own hunters! I had no idea,” said Ellen, thoughtfully, “that, with an allowance of four hundred pounds a-year, you would find it possible to keep hunters of your own.”

Edward laughed.

“Poor Ellen! I dare say I find it possible to do many other things, of which you have no idea, and then I find it quite impossible to do without them. I did try, upon my honour; but I wasted away for want of exercise, shut up in

those infernal barracks. And now, my dear girl, lose no more time, but go to my father, and say, in your prettiest manner, that you see poor Edward is longing to hunt this morning, only he is shy about asking for a horse, and so on—you know the sort of thing. I will wait here till you come back. And kiss me, Ellen, before you go. You are a good girl, and pretty withal, and you know it is better to be pretty than good. There's morality for you ! given after Elizabeth's most approved manner."

In half an hour Ellen was standing at the window watching Edward mount, and gallop across the park. Her father sighed, as he marked the fond, proud look she cast towards him.

"So Edward has carried his point," said Elizabeth, with something of a smile ; but neither the sigh nor the smile accorded with Ellen's feelings ; and casting one deprecating look at her sister, she left the room.

It was three years from this time, that at her father's house in Grosvenor-square, I again saw Lady Ellen Glanville. Brilliant in smiles and beauty, she was seated on an ottoman, gaily talking and laughing with those who surrounded her. Suddenly an expression of pain, almost of fear, passed over her countenance, her voice faltered, and she suddenly paused.

The change did not last; the next moment she was conversing with greater spirit than before.

"So Frederick Percival has been making a brilliant speech to-night,"—said Charles Dalrymple, in his thin wiry voice. "Was it on the rail-road question?"

"On the rail-road question!" interrupted Edward Glanville, "my dear fellow, it is only you who can be brilliant upon the rail-road question; and no wonder, with the prospect of having your park cut in two. But I am sorry

to hear this of Percival ; he will shine as a politician, and be lost to society."

" He is not lost to-night ; I had a glimpse of him just now ; had not you, Lady Ellen ?" and Lord Raymond, as he asked the question, fixed his dark keen eyes upon her.

Ellen was spared the trouble of answering, for Percival at that moment approached her. There was a little restless looking girl seated beside Ellen, who, for the last half-hour, had been vainly trying to obtain what she conceived a due share of attention.

" Oh, Mr. Percival !" she began, the moment he was within speaking distance ; " how glad I am you are come : we have heard and talked of nothing but your success. I have been dying to wish you joy !" and Miss Beaumont moved nearer to Ellen, so as to leave him a vacant space on the ottoman beside herself ; but he, giving her a look which plainly said, " what possible claim have you to my society ?"

passed her hastily, and, after a moment's hesitation, held out his hand to Lady Ellen.

"To-night,"—he said, as he bent towards her,—“to-night, will you not meet me cordially? When all are congratulating me, have not you one kind word for me?”

“I do congratulate you,” said Ellen, as for an instant she lightly placed her hand in his; “I can fancy, and almost envy, the pleasure of your feelings—the pleasure of complete success. But I must not sit idly here, and leave my father to receive all those people. Edward, will you take me to him?” and rising, she passed her arm through her brother's.

“You need not envy me now,” said Percival, the deep low tone of his voice almost sinking to a whisper as he drew back to let her pass.

“Let me go with you, Lady Ellen,” cried Miss Beaumont; “I ought to look for mamma; I wonder where she is likely to be? Lord Raymond, have you seen mamma?”

Lord Raymond, feeling that his arm was likely to be put in requisition, had made a skilful retreat.

“ Why, how odd ! Lord Raymond was here just now. Oh ! there is Mr. Douglas. How do you do, Mr. Douglas ? We are trying to make our way into the next room ; but I never saw such a crowd ; I cannot conceive how we are to get through the doorway ;” and she withdrew her arm from Ellen, who continued quietly to advance.

“ Yes, I hate a crowd ; I wonder you try—” Mr. Douglas answered in an absent tone.

In despair, Miss Beaumont rejoined Ellen. “ How could you leave me, dear Lady Ellen ? I fell in with that dreadful Mr. Douglas—so tiresome and absent—if he once joins me, I can never get rid of him ; I had such difficulty to shake him off. Mr. Glanville, it is all your fault for hurrying your sister so.”

“ He shall take charge of you now,” said

Ellen; "for I must go and say a word to the Dalrymples; Elizabeth will not stay much longer."

"I should be delighted to make myself of use, Miss Beaumont; but there are Mrs. Beaumont and your sisters, eagerly looking out for you, so your search is happily ended. Ellen," whispered Edward, as he hastily retreated, "see if I do not revenge myself upon you for this."

Eliza Beaumont, who had pertinaciously turned her back upon her mother, from the moment she caught a glimpse of her, was now obliged to seat herself by her sisters; but she found consolation in wondering they did not seem more amused; *she* thought it a delightful party. Lady Ellen, she said, had insisted upon their keeping together—Lord Raymond, Mr. Percival, Captain Glanville, and many more, had devoted themselves to her; and if she had not been afraid that they were waiting for her to go

home, she should never have prevailed upon herself to leave the ottoman in the next room.

“Have you seen the Harrisons here?” Miss Beaumont roused herself to ask; and upon being answered in the negative, she added, with an air of great relief, “I am very sorry, they will be so mortified; for, you know, mamma, they have always tried to make out, that they were more intimate with Lady Ellen than we are.”

“Yes, mamma, and John Harrison calls Lord Lindsay, Lindsay, behind his back; which he does not dare do to his face; for Richard, who has never thought of trying such a thing, watched when they were together.”

“And I cannot make out,” added Eliza, “why they all affect to say ‘Mr. Glanville.’ I looked in the army list the other day, and he is decidedly a Captain.”

Lady Elizabeth was now joined by Ellen.

This was her first appearance in the world since her marriage ; a most satisfactory event to herself, to Ellen, and above all, to Edward Glanville,—who passed much more of his time at home, now Elizabeth had ceased to be an inmate there. She was older than Edward, and had continued to treat him as a boy, and as nobody, long after he claimed and found, every where but at home, a place of some importance in society. When, at last, frequent reports of his popularity forced Elizabeth to allow his social existence, his extravagance, his dissipation, his coxcombry, were the constant themes of her discourse. His wit provoked, his sarcasms disconcerted her, and by degrees, a feeling had arisen between them, as nearly akin to dislike, as could be allowed to exist in what was called a very united family. Then Edward spoiled Ellen by his foolish admiration for her, and Ellen positively worshipped Edward, and did all she could to humour his

follies, as if he had not too many already. In short, Elizabeth disapproved very decidedly of the way in which affairs were now managed in her father's house; she wished that Lindsay would return and put things on a different footing.

Once or twice she had herself tried to insinuate to Lord Mordaunt, that Ellen was too young to be allowed such complete independence; and that Edward ought not to be encouraged to spend so much of his time in London; but she had failed in making any impression.

A long and useful life was passed, and Lord Mordaunt, now at the verge of extreme old age, with failing strength of mind and body, shrank from hearing or understanding any thing that would disturb all that is left to the aged to enjoy—the peace and contentment of home.

When he was asked for his consent to Elizabeth's marriage with Charles Dalrymple, if he wondered at her choice of one whom he

considered without exception as the most tiresome young man that he had ever admitted to his dinner-table, he was satisfied that Elizabeth must be the best judge, as to whether his intrinsic worth, and his ten thousand pounds a-year, would compensate for passing her life in his society, for treating him in public as a superior, and at home, as a reasonable being. Ellen was not so tolerant; her brother-in-law, with his eternal questions, and fidgets, and affronts, bored and irritated her, and all her consideration for Elizabeth was required to make her support his society, without showing her impatience.

This evening, though Elizabeth received her greeting most graciously, Ellen instantly saw that something was wrong with him, and accordingly, the two sisters had scarcely settled into conversation, when his head was protruded between them.

“ Elizabeth, my love, I beg pardon for inter-

rupting you, but I wish to take this opportunity to ask your sister about my mother's card. We have some reason, Ellen, to believe, your porter must have mislaid my mother's card. She called here ten days ago, immediately upon her arrival in London, and as her visit has never been returned, she imagines it has not been made known."

Ellen felt dreadfully guilty. Every day she had carefully written old Mrs. Dalrymple's name at the head of a list of visits, and every day had found or made some fresh excuse for deferring the evil hour. She now hastily expressed her contrition, and her intention of going the next morning; and again turning to Elizabeth, found amusement in listening to her remarks on the various individuals about them. But though entertaining, Elizabeth's conversation was always a doubtful enjoyment to Ellen: it never seemed to express her own feelings and opinions, but to be directed

against those of the person she was conversing with.

She would show an interest in Ellen's communications, which, in spite of former resolutions, would lead her on to talk, unreservedly, of all that most interested her; and it was only when left dispirited and comfortless, that Ellen would discover the latent sting which lurked in Elizabeth's replies.

This evening her spirits were not high, and she felt unequal to the covert warfare in which she soon discovered she was engaged; and it was with a feeling of relief that she found herself addressed by Lord Raymond. "I have come to you for intelligence, Lady Ellen. A new beauty who has made her appearance here to-night; so very new, that nobody can tell her name; and so very beautiful, that every body is asking for it. Now, can you enlighten me?"

"If she cannot, Edward probably can," in-

terposed Elizabeth: "I did not know, Ellen, that the Howards were acquaintances of yours."

Ellen was not obliged to hear. "You can only mean Miss Rivers. I know no more of her than that she is a niece of the Howards, who asked leave to bring her. When they were announced, I hurried to receive them, fearing that she might feel awkward at having come uninvited; but she received my common-place assurances of pleasure at seeing her, as nothing more than her due. I never saw a manner more self-possessed. There was something almost contemptuous in the calmness with which she stood, while that pretty little Mrs. Howard overwhelmed me with apologies and flatteries. She is certainly very beautiful, but she looks alarming."

"In other words, you dislike what you have seen of her, and do not wish to see more. When any body says to me, 'I am afraid of you,' I only look upon it as a civil manner of insinuat-

ing, 'I dislike your society.' There are not many who frighten me, but it would be unpleasant to me to live much with those who do. Yet there is one who certainly improves upon me, and whose acquaintance I feel anxious to cultivate: but Frederick Percival's manner is not encouraging."

"I have known him so very long, so very intimately," answered Ellen, slightly colouring, "I hardly know what effect it may have upon a stranger. I believe it may appear reserved, for I have heard others make the same complaint. But during the many years his family have been abroad, our house has almost been his home. I should as soon expect to find reserve in Edward, as in him. Lately, indeed, we have seen less of him; he is too much immersed in politics to have time to bestow on his friends."

"And to-night," said Lord Raymond, "he has made a decided step, in a career which must prove a brilliant one. I was in the

house when he spoke. I never heard a more convincing torrent of eloquence. You can hardly fancy the enthusiasm with which it was received. May I venture to add, that were mine the happiness of knowing you so long, and so intimately,"—he repeated her words with a slight emphasis—"upon such an occasion I should have dared hope to be more warmly congratulated."

"We understand each other," Ellen answered, coldly; and raising her eyes, she met those of Percival, fixed upon her with an expression of sadness, from which she positively shrank. Almost involuntarily she pronounced his name; and in an instant he was at her side.

Lord Raymond, though he quitted her, still lingered near. He saw the deepening interest of their conversation; the grave earnestness with which Percival addressed her; the quivering of her beautiful lip, as in broken sentences she seemed to answer him. He saw her emotion grow stronger

still—he almost fancied that tears were falling from beneath the long dark lashes, which now drooped, till they rested on her cheek. Percival rose, and stood before her.

“She loves him,” thought Lord Raymond—“and now he is entreating her to be calm; to conceal the emotion he has caused. She loves him—and he may be worthy of her; but, oh God! can his love be any thing like mine?”

Lord Raymond had lingered till he felt he had no right to linger longer. The rooms were almost deserted. He was recalled to recollection and activity, by Eliza Beaumont’s request that he would just be so very good as to ask if their carriage was there. “I told you that you might trust to me to find somebody to get us away,” she said triumphantly to her sisters, as Lord Raymond descended the stair-case. “Good night, Mrs. Howard; we are only waiting till Lord Raymond tells us that the carriage is ready. Yes,

Richard, by all means accept Mrs. Irvine's offer of a lift home; Lord Raymond will take care of us."

"Is that your carriage they are calling, Lady Elizabeth, or is it Lord Raymond telling us ours is ready?"

"My dears," interrupted Mrs. Beaumont, "have you got your shawls? That civil, red-haired, out of livery man, has been to tell me that our carriage has drawn off, but that we may still walk to it;—here, take my arm, Eliza; stick close behind us, Maria and Anne—there; we shall manage very well."

"I am afraid Lord Raymond will be hunting for us," said Eliza, as they drove off, at the very moment it would have appeared, upon a reasonable calculation, Lord Raymond had fairly arrived at his own home.

Percival too, was gone; and Ellen and her brother were left together. "It is not very late, Ellen," he said, drawing her towards him; "I

will stay a little while, and let us talk these people over."

"Not to-night—dearest Edward!—not to-night; come early to-morrow; I am so tired now—so very, very tired!"—and she rested her head upon his shoulder.

"Then, God bless you, my darling Ellen! but what is the matter? why, your cheek is wet with tears! what is the matter?" he repeated, as he caught the sounds of her suppressed sobs. "Speak to me, Ellen; I dare say that Elizabeth has been saying something particularly disagreeable; tell me what is vexing you?"

"Nothing, Edward, nothing!" she answered, half smiling through her tears; "I am only very tired, and quite worn out with being pleasant. Come and ride with me to-morrow; and now, good night!"

CHAPTER II.

“There’s nothing like a modicum of civil malice, between dear, kind, good-natured friends.”

“And little things, seem great to little men.”

“It will be but kind, my dears, for some of us to go and see the Harrisons to-day. As they were not asked themselves, they will like to hear how the Mordaunt party went off last night.”

This was Mrs. Beaumont’s first address to her two eldest daughters, when they made their appearance the next morning in the

drawing-room ; where the drained tea-pot, the silent urn, and the littered table-cloth, gave tacit, but feeling evidence, that the orthodox hour of breakfast was past.

“How wretchedly uncomfortable!” said Maria, advancing towards the bell ; “ I do wish that Harding could any-how be taught, that when we do not appear so soon as the others, we must have something to eat when we do come.”

“ Stay, young ladies, I will have no ringing for any thing more,” Mr. Beaumont said, looking up from his *Morning Post*. “ There was a very good family breakfast at ten, a very good family hour, and those who cannot be down for it, must take what they can get.”

“ There, Miss Maria, that’s all you have got by giving yourself airs about breakfast,” said her youngest brother, who was at home for the holidays.

“ How disagreeable boys are !” was Maria’s

answer, aside to Eliza, as she seated herself at the comfortless looking table; "and Charles, I tell you once for all, that I will not have the hot crumb from your rolls put in my plate every morning—there is no wit in it."

"Yes, there is though, because it makes you so cross," said Charles, as he ran out of the room.

"Well, girls, have you got nothing to tell? no news? no scandal?" said their father, again looking up from his paper. "Is Frederick Percival still assiduous about the fair Ellen? and how will the courteous old lord make up his mind to that?"

"The courteous old lord strikes me as having no mind left to make up," answered Maria, sharply. "I declare he positively twaddles. We sate close by him half the evening, and he never seemed to find out that we were in the room; and when at last I touched his elbow and asked him how he was, he answered, quite

well, and delighted to see his old neighbour, Mrs. Harrison, and her daughters."

"Poor Maria! so he took you for Kate Harrison," said her brother Richard, with a loud laugh, as he left the room to commence his daily irksome walk to Lincoln's Inn.

"I do think that loud laugh of Richard the most odious thing," said Maria to her mother. "I wish, mamma, you would tell him of it."

"Well, but Maria," said Eliza, "I am surprised to hear that Lord Mordaunt did not know you—he was so very civil to me—quite put himself out of the way to step forward, and ask me how I did. As to Mr. Percival and Lady Ellen, I do not think much of that—they took scarcely any notice of each other—he seemed more inclined to talk to me than to her."

"Now, Eliza," interrupted Maria, "nobody but you could have fancied that. When we came away, I never saw a more decided look-

ing business. But they seemed very unhappy. I suspect that Lord Mordaunt will not give his consent."

"Yet he might do worse," said her father. "They say old Percival's affairs are coming round, and that he will soon return to England, and reside on his own property. But even if his ruin should be irretrievable, Frederick must eventually inherit from that rich curmudgeon of an uncle, who has stood aloof during all their distresses. And, in the meantime, he is one who will make himself a station in the world. His speech last night will bring him into notice. I think it over liberal, and wrong-headed. Like all very young men, he is bit by the political economists; but that is the popular line, and will tell for his advancement."

These last words were pronounced in a manner which was meant to be eminently sarcastic; for Mr. Beaumont prided himself upon being an old Tory of the old school. All the Beau-

monts always had been Tories, and he flattered himself that he was a thorough Beaumont : so he was a member of the Conservative Club ; set himself against every thing in the shape of public improvement ; was called a sterling capital old fellow, by “all the Beaumonts,” who rallied round him ; and was illiberal and narrow-minded to his heart’s content.

At this moment the door was thrown open, and Mr. John Harrison and the Miss Harrisons were announced. After the buzz of dear Maria’s and dear Kate’s was over, Mrs. Beaumont began upon the subject nearest her heart.

“How is your mother, to-day, Kate ? We were just going to inquire after her, for we were afraid, as we did not see any of you last night, that something must be the matter at home.”

“Last night !” repeated Kate, “I forget what there was, last night. Oh ! I remember— one of those large Mordaunt parties. I hate them ; do not you ? Lady Ellen says, they al-

ways give one or two of them in the year, just to clear off her visiting list, and they are a sad mixture. However, next Wednesday we shall go, and I hope have the pleasure of meeting you. There is 'very small,' and 'very early,' at the corner of the cards this time; so it will be select and good."

This was a dreadful blow. The Beaumonts had no card, and in their lives never had had one, with "small and early" at the corner; and Mrs. Beaumont, feeling herself fairly defeated, made a hasty attempt to change the subject; but Julia Harrison took it up, and pertinaciously pursued it.

"We shall meet you, of course. I would not miss going for the world, it will be so very interesting."

"And why should it be so very interesting?" asked Mrs. Beaumont, jesuitically avoiding to notice the first part of the sentence.

"Why! is it possible?" exclaimed Kate,

“that you have not heard of the marriage? John! only think, they have not heard of the marriage! Well, I wonder that Lady Ellen did not tell you. Mamma and I are going there to congratulate. So very extraordinary that she should not have let you know about it. You will be so surprised.”

The Beaumonts had nothing left for it, but to look dignified and uninterested. Eliza, indeed, hazarded something about Frederick Percival and Lady Ellen, but was immediately silenced by—

“Oh, no, not that old story! I do not believe there is any thing in that. Well, I suppose we must tell you. Lord Lindsay is going to be married to Miss Spencer, Lord Raymond’s sister. It was all settled at Paris, and both the families are delighted. Lord Lindsay is on his way hence, with old Lady Raymond and his *fiancée*; and I suppose we shall see them together next Wednesday. You will be sure

to go, will not you?" added Julia, who was dying to know whether they were asked.

"And it is positively settled and declared?" asked Eliza, with something of a pang: for though Lord Lindsay had never seemed to perceive her existence, he was unmarried and a neighbour, and did to dream about when she was in the country.

"To be sure it is," said John Harrison. "I had this morning a letter from Lindsay—(Maria pressed Eliza's foot under the table)—and you can give me, for your authority, that the marriage is settled."

This was a bold stroke of John's; for the letter simply related to a horse-dealing transaction, and was written in a dry, business-like manner, without the slightest allusion to the marriage—which he had accidentally heard the night before at the Travellers. For, like all family mysteries, it had been talked over, commented upon in every possible view of the subject, any

where, and every where, but at Mordaunt House. Indeed, so positive had been Lord Lindsay's injunctions of secrecy, till he had received a propitious answer from some rich uncle or cousin of his intended bride, it was only that morning Lord Mordaunt had felt himself at liberty to mention the fact to Ellen ; and Charles Dalrymple was, at that very moment, fretting up and down Elizabeth's drawing-room, in a positive fever of offended dignity. A note had arrived from his mother, full of congratulations upon an event, of which she naturally concluded he and Elizabeth would have had the earliest information. He was really distressed how to answer her. How could he own, situated as he was in the family, that no communication had been sent ? It showed a want of confidence in Lord Mordaunt, a want of consideration in Ellen, that was quite unpardonable. What would Elizabeth advise him to answer ? Under the circum-

stances, would it not be better to deny the whole affair?

But as there seemed to be no doubt of the truth of the report, Elizabeth, over whom her husband's fusses always had a calming effect, said his mother would probably not believe him.

"True, he had never thought of that. He was really placed in a most extraordinary position;"—and his small peevish mouth actually quivered with agitation.

"Had we not better walk to Grosvenor-square," suggested Elizabeth, "and see my father? and you can send word to your mother, that we will call upon her in our way back."

After some demur as to whether, under the circumstances of the case, he could take such a step without degradation, he consented, and was somewhat mollified upon finding Ellen actually employed in writing to Elizabeth, and hearing her reiterated assurances, that she had herself been only an hour in possession of the

intelligence. After suggesting to her the expedience of an early official communication to his mother, he announced his intention of proceeding to her himself—a proposition which was eagerly seconded by Elizabeth; and the two sisters were left to talk the matter over in peace.

“ And papa, Ellen—what does he say to this marriage of Lindsay’s? does it satisfy him?”

“ Yes, I believe so; he likes the connexion, and all we hear of Mary Spencer is very satisfactory. But you know how papa considers Lindsay. I really believe the person does not exist upon the earth, whom papa would think good enough for him; and he would certainly prefer the lady’s having a little more money. But I have done my best to comfort him about that; for though we talk so pathetically of our poverty, I suspect that it is only talk. My uncle, who knows all about papa’s affairs,

says, that it is a fancy of Lindsay's, and that it is a pity he wearies papa about nothing."

"I believe," answered Elizabeth, "that Lindsay was frightened, and with some reason, at Edward's extravagance. His debts have been twice paid already; and Lindsay was of opinion that it would have been more prudent, and in fact, kinder to Edward, to have let him suffer a little for his follies, instead of encouraging him to persevere in them."

"There was no encouragement! If you knew all, Elizabeth, you would not say so. Edward was extravagant—I neither deny it, nor defend it; but if Lindsay did but know, as I do, how much kindness can do with Edward, he would not risk driving him, by severity, from all those who can influence him to good. Dear, dear papa! how thankful I felt to him, that he withstood all the unkind influence that was used. And Edward—even you, Elizabeth, will own,

that you have heard no reports of his extravagance since."

"Not of his extravagance!" answered Elizabeth, with one of her meaning smiles, which made Ellen feel uncomfortable, she could scarcely have said why; but she resolutely refrained from asking any question; and Elizabeth, after pausing for encouragement, continued without it——

"Are not the Howards new acquaintances of yours? Mrs. Howard once made strong efforts to draw me into an intimacy; but, from the very first, I made a point of repelling her advances. I had not the vanity to suppose that she was actuated by the simple wish of enjoying my society; she is too pretty, and too much used to be told so, to content herself with that. You are probably aware, that Edward almost passes his life at her home; and Mr. Dalrymple tells us that he hears at Boodle's ——"

"If you are going to repeat to me any ill-

natured reports about Edward, spare me, Elizabeth !” interrupted Ellen, with a spirit she always shewed when he was attacked ; “ though as the reports Mr. Dalrymple picks up at Boodle’s are probably about some of our ancestors, I do not know why I should mind. And now will not you come down to papa ? he will expect you to wish him joy.”

CHAPTER III.

Lord Angelo is precise ;
Stands at a guard with envy ; scarce confesses
That his blood flows, or that his appetite
Is more to bread than stone.

Measure for Measure.

“ Say, is this love, or only phantasy ? ”

EVEN the most intimate friends and associates of the Glanville family, though habitually thrown into the society of Lord Lindsay, felt his presence always chill them, as that of a stranger. He had certainly great natural talents, and his mind was highly cultivated ; but either from pride or shyness, he spoke but little—he seemed determined to keep even his knowledge to himself. Cold, stern, and unimpas-

sioned, both in actions and in manner, whatever sins Lord Lindsay may have committed, whatever pain inflicted by his words, he was at least spared the possibility of reproaching himself with rashness, or momentary inadvertence ; for all was the result of previous calculation. No event, however unforeseen, no appeal, however energetic, could draw him from the line of conduct he had determined to pursue. However difficult it might be to understand his character from cursory observation, it became clear to those who studied it, that selfishness, unrestrained, hardened selfishness, had blighted, and eventually destroyed, all that might have been noble and good.

Over his father his influence was unbounded. Years had reversed the relative positions of father and son : for aged and feeble himself, Lord Mordaunt, in any difficulty or uncertainty, gladly availed himself of the cool judgment and decision of one who, whatever his faults, had

never failed in duty towards him. Edward, too, however unlike him in disposition, was proud of his brother, though but little of intimacy subsisted between them. Lord Lindsay was at college, when Edward first left his home for school. At fifteen he had joined his regiment; and when, in after life, they occasionally met at their father's house, Lord Lindsay's unbending manner did not encourage confidence. Yet in Edward's wildest moments, (and in those days he *was* wild with youth and spirits, and ungovernable happiness) one word of advice or blame from his brother would calm and check him. But that word was seldom spoken: it might bring on scenes and explanations, of which Lord Lindsay had an insupportable horror: it was only by the cold sarcasm of his manner that he ever signified his displeasure.

Yes, Edward *was* wild, extravagant, and impetuous. He had many faults which, in early life, a mother's watchfulness, a mother's

influence, might have eradicated ; but she died shortly after Ellen's birth ; and Edward, without one fixed principle to guide him, was early thrown into a life of temptation and excitement. Those who remembered him, when, after three years absence, he first returned to Mordaunt Castle, so frank and affectionate in manner, so quick and brilliant in conversation, thought they had never before met with one so formed to attract and delight ; and when this opinion of him was openly and warmly expressed—

“True,” answered old Lord Mordaunt, “he is a handsome affectionate boy ; but to a younger son, who must trust for advancement in life to his own steadiness, are not the shining qualities you admire, a misfortune rather than an advantage?”

The question might seem a harsh one ; but “time gave it a deep answer.”

Meanwhile, there was one who could see no fault in Edward ; who could listen to no forebod-

ing of future ill to him. Child as he was, Ellen was the constant companion of his amusements ; the confident of all his early troubles. He would go with her to coax her old French governess into giving her holiday after holiday, that they might set off for the day, on some far expedition together ; and the old lady, who doated upon “ *ce cher jeune capitaine Edouard,*” would shake her head and try to look grave, and wish that *milédi* Ellen would be as studious and *posée* as *milédi* Elizabeth ; and then she would pack up their luncheon, and little Ellen’s cloaks, in the poney-phaeton, and arrange Edward’s fishing-tackle, and ejaculate over the artificial flies of her own invention ; and when they were out of sight, she would potter back into the house, with something between a grunt and a sigh, to watch the clouds, and hope the children would not get into mischief.

An intimate of the family saw her one day

standing near the window which looked on the lawn. There was evidently something to be seen that was interesting, and that it was amusing too, might be guessed, from the involuntary shaking of her shoulders.

“Well, Mrs. Renardin,” was the friendly greeting, “what are you so busy about, that you cannot turn round to say a word to an old acquaintance?”

“Ah ! pardon Monsieur, mais regardez donc ces enfants. C’est qu’ils sont fous, vraiment fous ; et ce méchant Capitaine Edouard, qui m’a promis d’avoir bien soin de Lédi Ellen, parce qu’elle porte une si jolie robe ce matin. Ah ! je le gronderai bien, je ne rirai pas, je ne rirai pas,” added the old lady, shaking her head at him, and laughing till she was forced to sit down in an old-fashioned arm-chair, which Edward and Ellen in early days had joined their pocket-money to buy for her.

A glance from the window shewed that there was good cause both for her provocation and

amusement. Percival, then staying there for the long vacation, was walking first, carrying his own and Edward's gun; Edward followed, heavily laden with the birds they had killed; and Ellen closed the procession, dragging after her, with difficulty, two enormous hares; "*la jolie robe*" giving evident signs that a hedge, or a ploughed field, had been no impediment to her devotion in her calling.

The clattering of feet was heard upon the stairs, and Ellen, relieved from her burthen by Percival, bounded into the room. For a moment she stood at the door, glancing through her shining ringlets with an air, half bashful, half assured, while Edward, with his pocket-handkerchief to his eyes, gravely advanced to the old lady, and deposited his birds in her lap.

"*Ah! méchant,*" she began; but Ellen's arms were round her, and Edward's mock contrition grew vociferous, and Percival's voice was heard petitioning for leave to enter, and, as

usual, Mrs. Renardin allowed herself to be pacified, and to listen to the adventures "the children" had to tell.

Those were happy days. Another year, and time had done its usual work; and hearts which seemed too light and bounding for any shadow to overcast,

"Sunk low with sorrow, or beat quick with pain."

Edward's imprudence had already involved him in difficulties, which, after many struggles, Ellen prevailed upon him to confess to his father. Then followed scenes of remonstrance, and late repentance, and resolutions of amendment, too soon forgotten.

Ellen saw Lord Mordaunt's deep vexation, Lord Lindsay's cold displeasure, and sank under Edward's errors and unhappiness as if they were her own. He rejoined his regiment, and Ellen wept at parting as she had never wept before.

"Oh, Edward, be good and prudent now—for my sake, dearest, if not for your own."

He pressed her to his heart, and soothed and comforted her; but it could not be—the past had taught her to fear for the future, and her feelings of security were gone, and for ever.

There was another parting, too. Young as Frederick Percival was, his talents had already brought him into notice, and he had scarcely left college when he was called upon to take an active part in the politics of the day. His family were shortly expected to return to England. For the first time, for some years, he left Mordaunt Castle, without any definite moment being fixed for his return. He loved Ellen, with all the warm devotion of a first early love; and now the avowal of that love was made; and all he felt, and all he dared to hope, was rapidly poured forth. His father's ruined fortunes would be retrieved. He felt he had that within him, which would work his way to fortune and to fame.

“Only give me hope, Ellen, only tell me

that when the day shall come, when I shall dare demand you from your father, you will not turn from me. We are both so young ; a few years may pass, and we shall yet have a long life of happiness before us. Ellen, do not turn from me ; speak to me, love, and let the recollection of words of kindness and encouragement be my consolation in this long absence."

These words were spoken : Ellen only saw Frederick's unhappiness—Frederick, whom she had loved as another brother. Unhesitatingly she gave him the assurance of affection he pleaded for ; unhesitatingly promised that Edward only should be told of all that had passed between them. Had Ellen considered the solemn nature of the engagement she was entering into, she would have paused ; but she was yet a child in feelings and in years ; she had no mother to check or guide her ; small wonder, then, and yet smaller blame, that at such a moment her better judgment failed her.

“I am so glad that he is happy and satisfied now,” she thought, when she found herself alone. “But why should he have doubted my affection? we have never had a quarrel; and who have I ever seen that I could care for, like him and Edward? In time, I suppose, like every body else, I must marry; and when Frederick gets money enough, if papa does not object—and I hardly see how he can—for he is always telling Edward that he wishes he was as steady as Frederick—it will be better that we should marry one another, than two strangers, that we know nothing about now.” And having arrived at this conclusion, she ran out of the house to feed her chickens.

It was some months after that a letter from Edward, enclosing one from Percival, roused her to a fear that she had acted wrong and rashly. It was the first that she had ever received from Frederick: she had positively refused to correspond with him unknown to her

father ; and he, respecting her scruples, had not pressed her to do so. He now only wrote to tell her of his acceptance of an office, which, though small, gave an opening for future advancement. He recalled to her their parting words ; he warmly repeated his assurances of attachment ; his reliance on her sympathy in his sanguine views for the future. There was a devotion in his expression that almost startled Ellen. Since they parted, he seemed to have thought of her alone : his hopes, his fears, had all centred in her ; and for the first time she doubted whether the affection she felt for him could satisfy such feelings.

The season was come, when they were to leave Mordaunt Castle, and she was to make her first appearance in the London world. Frederick would again be a constant visitor at their house. "Do not laugh at me, dearest Edward," she wrote to her brother, "when I tell you that I am almost frightened at the thought of seeing

him again. I feel now that the fear of making him unhappy led me into promising what was very, very wrong. Day after day we must meet—we have always met; but deeper thoughts and feelings will be ours. If papa knew all, I should be happy, as I used to be—for, indeed I am often unhappy now, when I think I keep any thing secret from him. But Frederick begs me so earnestly to wait another year, when he says he trusts his father will return, relieved from all his difficulties, and then he will ask papa to consent to our marriage, and tell him how long we have loved each other. You know I have always loved Frederick;—only sometimes I wish that he were less grave, and more like you; for the thought of seeing you never frightens me, my darling Edward.”

The London season passed, unmarked by any event but Elizabeth’s marriage; another season was now come, and Ellen felt that the crisis of her fate was approaching. Frederick had not

deceived her; already he was advanced to a situation where eloquence and talents such as his had field for display. Lord Mordaunt spoke of him with pride and affection; Lord Lindsay, in his letters, mentioned him with increasing consideration, as one of the most rising young men of the day. Charles Dalrymple constantly plied him with cards of invitation to dinner, and almost as constantly apologized to himself and his guests for the empty chair, which he felt assured that nothing but Frederick's devotion to the good of his country, could prevent him from occupying. And Ellen!—none could suspect how deep was her interest in his success. With the fear of betraying their engagement—with her self-condemnation for the rashness with which she had formed it—she almost shrank from his society; even Elizabeth's manner was warm compared to hers; and the Beaumonts, who in direct contradiction to the Harrisons, had al-

ways declared that the intimacy would end in a marriage, were completely puzzled.

But Frederick, from whom she could not conceal her secret agitation, who knew her motives for reserve, was satisfied. He saw her surrounded by admirers; but jealousy itself could have found no cause for distrust. He saw that her spirits were unequal, and rejoiced that the time was come, when the mystery that weighed upon them might be done away with.

There was one who had sometimes suspected that a deeper feeling than appeared subsisted between them. Lord Raymond watched Ellen, with the anxious watchfulness of one whose every hope of happiness would be wrecked in the confirmation of his suspicions. Firmly, though gently, she had repressed the avowal of a love, which seemed to him a part of his existence: yet still he lingered near her. He saw that, though free and unembarrassed with all others, her eye sank beneath the passing glance of Frederick,

her voice faltered as she named him. In vain he tried to turn from the conviction that her love was his; and when, at her father's house, he witnessed the agitation she could no longer conceal, his heart sank, as he felt there was no hope for him.

CHAPTER IV.

Is there a tear, a human tear,
From passion's dross refined and clear ;
'Tis that which pious fathers shed,
Upon a duteous daughter's head.

SCOTT.

“ LET me answer some of these letters, papa,” said Ellen, as she pressed her lips to her father's forehead. “ You have written quite enough ; more than is good for you. Now make over these congratulations to me, and you will see how prettily you will feel happiness, and satisfaction, and gratitude ; and how there never was such a son as Lindsay has been, nor such a daughter-

in-law as Mary will be. You will let me try to be of some use to you to-day, will not you? for since we came to town I have been quite idle, and good for nothing."

"You have been amusing yourself, my child, but you have not neglected your old father; no daughter-in-law can be to me what you are, my darling Ellen."

The tears started into Ellen's eyes, and as she knelt by her father's chair, she fondly raised them to his. "Then it would grieve you, papa, to part with me, as you have parted with Elizabeth?"

"Not if it were for your happiness, my child—and yet," he laid his wrinkled hand upon her shining hair, "perhaps it is an old man's selfish thought; but I would wish to keep you a little longer with me; a little longer," he repeated, half unconsciously, "and then our earthly parting may be spared."

"Oh! I will never leave you, papa, never,

never!" burst from Ellen's lips. The next moment she was startled by a well-known knock at the door: she was calmed at once. "It is Frederick, I believe—yes, I heard his voice."

"Then I must make him over to you, as well as my letters," said Lord Mordaunt: "go to him, love, in the drawing-room; I am too tired to see him now."

Ellen obeyed, and as her father kissed and fondly blessed her, her resolution was taken; but she slowly ascended the stairs to the drawing-room, and when Frederick advanced to meet her, she vainly tried to still the beatings of her heart. "If he should think me cold—if I should give him pain," she thought, and it was a relief to her that his first words should be of her brother's marriage; but her answers were unconnected, and her manner hurried and ill at ease. Frederick stopped, and looked at her. "There is something in this marriage which distresses you, Ellen!"

“ No, Frederick, no ; but I wished to ask you, I wished to consult you.” She hid her burning face in her hands. “ Oh ! that I had courage to say all I ought, all I wished, that I knew what was right and best to do !”

“ And is there any thing that you can fear to say to me, my own Ellen ? yes, my very own. I dare call you so now ; the time is come when there need be no concealment from any one, much less from each other. Your fears, your wishes must be mine : as the friend and companion of your childhood, I might hope to share them ; as the accepted lover,—may I not say so, Ellen ? I claim them as my right. But, hear me first, dearest. I have so much to say, such happiness to speak of ; and it was but last night that the very congratulations showered on me were distasteful, because one loved voice feared to utter them, and I reproached you with coldness ; you, my kindest, truest Ellen. In the few hurried lines that I sent you this morning, I

told you that the time was come when I should dare ask you of your father. I will not enter on particulars now ; but keep these letters, love. You will see how high an office is offered to me, and how much my uncle, who left me to make my own way in the world, now proposes to do for me. Ellen, you have been my guardian angel : if it had not been for your dear sake, I should last year have accepted that situation abroad ; and now what brighter prospects are before me !”

“ And it was for my sake that you refused it, Frederick ? Oh ! why did you not tell me ? why did I not know of the new tie that bound me to you ? We have been so parted—I have sometimes thought of our engagement as a dream.”

“ But we shall be parted no more, Ellen. Lord Mordaunt has always shewn me the kindness of a father—he will not now refuse to accept me as a son.”

Ellen scarcely heard his words, but it was of him she thought ; and when next she spoke, her voice was tremulous and low. “ Dear Frederick, what devotion you have shewn to me—what sacrifices you have made. Such feelings are thronging on me now, but I cannot speak them. How deeply I feel your affection, it must be the endeavour of my future life to shew. But my father ! Frederick, it was of him I wished to speak ; he would consent, but I cannot, indeed I cannot leave him now. It was this I wished to tell you, but I feared to hurt you : I am sure that you will understand me, and feel as I do. When you came, I was kneeling by his side, meaning to tell him all, but I could not ; he seemed to guess my thoughts, and spoke so despondingly of himself, so reluctantly of parting with me. No, I cannot leave him to return alone to Mordaunt Castle. Lindsay says that Mary is not strong enough to bear a winter in England, and that they mean to pass it in Italy.

Edward's leave of absence will be over, and your office will keep you in London. Papa will have but me, dear Frederick, till spring, when Lindsay returns; you will not wish me to leave him?"

"I will strive not to wish it, Ellen; but to wait another year in my solitary home! that home which I was proud to think I had to offer you! You talk of the sacrifices I have made! this will be the greatest."

"It will be a sacrifice to both," Ellen strove to say, but her words were scarcely audible, and a pause, which was growing painful to her, was only broken by the entrance of Edward, who hastily exclaimed, "I have brought you a future connection, Ellen; but what is become of him? Already I have wasted ten whole minutes persuading him to come in. He could not presume—he would not for the world—he was afraid of intruding—and so on: he exhibited a great deal of superfluous modesty. Where

are you, Raymond? It is too late to escape now,—come in man, and let us all sit down and wish one another joy. But, bless me, Ellen! how is this? do you let in young gentlemen of a morning, and I not here to act as chaperon? This is a proceeding which I cannot sanction; I shall go and talk the matter over with Elizabeth. It is really what Dalrymple would call a most unprecedented and unfortunate occurrence, that this should have happened upon Raymond's first introduction into the family, when I should wish him to think well of us. Look at him; there he stands at the door, positively half shocked to death."

Edward's assertion was scarcely exaggerated. All Lord Raymond's fears of the preceding evening seemed at once confirmed; Percival could only be there as a declared and accepted lover; he was, indeed, an intruder, unexpected and unwelcome. For a moment he meditated making a hasty retreat; then he felt it would be

ridiculous, and rallying, he advanced and addressed Ellen in what might be termed a good set speech, the words pleasure and honour being particularly audible. He was interrupted by a laugh from Edward.

“Well done, Raymond! no one but Sir Charles Grandison could not have got through it so well, except, perhaps, old Lord Hargreaves, who picked up his breeding from the Prince de Ligne, Louis XIV., or some of those historical models of politeness. I have never seen a manner to equal yours. Percival, you know, has the run of the house; if he would only employ my tailor, he would be looked upon quite as a second me.”

“Do not mind Edward, Lord Raymond,” said Ellen, “I never listen to him when he is in one of his wild moods; there is no other way of reducing him to silence. I want you to tell me a great deal about your sister—Mary, as I am learning to call her. Though I never had

a brother married before, I know that is a right thing to do ; but I do not intend to follow farther the usual routine of sisters-in-law, who begin with an *engouement*, and end with a jealous dislike. From the first, I will handsomely abdicate every pretence to influence over Lindsay, (which is very much like a queen abdicating a kingdom she never possessed) and I will not insist upon Mary's adopting all our prejudices, or upon her loving all our friends, and employing all our trades-people. She shall be allowed, too, to shew an unnatural preference for her own family, from which she has never been separated a day, over ours, into which she will be suddenly transported. And now, tell me, will all this be likely to satisfy her ? will she be able to take up with us in return ? She has lived so very much abroad, I dare say she will think us exceedingly ill dressed ?”

Lord Raymond laughed. “ Poor Mary ! she will be too much frightened when she first

comes among you all, to think of the pattern of your gown, or even of Edward's waistcoat."

"My dear Raymond, don't calumniate your sister; she never could overlook such a waistcoat as this; it is only just arrived straight from Lyons, the fruits of a little venture I sent out on purpose. She will never see Lindsay in such a one. Ellen, I say, can you fancy Lindsay in love?"

"If she cannot, I can," said Percival. "He will be in love in a steady gentlemanlike sort of way,—exactng for Lady Lindsay, from the very moment she becomes Lady Lindsay, the same degree of consideration he expects for Lord Lindsay; and taking as a matter of course, that all her opinions originate in his. He will be twice as happy as he has been. Through life he has spoiled himself: now, Raymond, he will have your sister to spoil him too."

"And Mary will spoil him to his heart's content," said Lord Raymond;" she never seems

to have any will but that of those she lives with—any wish but to please them;—she will worship Lindsay, content if he will only let her love him;—and to you, Lady Ellen, she will cling for advice, and affection, and support in her new situation; for she is prepared to think you all that is ‘wisest, virtouousest, discreetest, best.’ Mary is by nature so humble and timid, you must not judge her till you know her well, and then I am sure I need not dread your opinion of her. How she ever ventured to fall in love with such a formidable personage as Lindsay, or how he ever condescended to distinguish her, I own, puzzles me.”

“Well, but, Percival,” rejoined Edward, “you say that you can fancy Lindsay in love. Now, don’t be solemn and grave, but give us the picture you have drawn of him in your mind’s eye. I could not get through breakfast this morning for laughing, to think of him, aux petit soins. For three days I would,—yes, Ellen,—I really

would submit to be a woman, for the pleasure of having Lindsay in love with me. What freaks I would indulge in!—how he should be kept on the trot, to satisfy all my innocent little fancies!—what a life of nursery gardens and jewellers' shops I would lead him!—and if ever he worked himself up to be sentimental, I would be seized with a violent love of dancing, and insist upon teaching him to dance the Mazourka. Think of the pride and pleasure of making Lindsay dance!” and quite overcome by the image, Edward, flinging himself back in an arm-chair, overthrew an easel which supported a large picture Ellen was copying. Both Raymond and Percival darted forwards to her assistance, but not before her arm was severely sprained in the attempt to arrest its descent. She turned very pale, but rallied almost immediately, as she heard Edward's vehement self-reproaches for his heedlessness; and disengaging herself from Percival, who, now completely off his guard,

was pouring out fears and inquiries with very much the tone of one who had the best right to care for her safety,—she tried to turn their attention from herself to the picture.

“Edward, if that Titian is the worse for its fall, we must fly the country together. Now I am punished for my rashness in having borrowed it. What poor Mr. Graham would feel, if he could only see it lying there on its face, and not one of us with courage to raise it! Lord Raymond,—Frederick,—you who are unconcerned spectators, take the first look, and break to us gently the condition it is in.”

“Unconcerned!” repeated Lord Raymond, as he mechanically stooped and restored the uninjured picture to its original position. But it was of no inanimate object he thought,—and Ellen, who had studiously avoided looking towards him, tried vainly not to understand all that the tone of that single word conveyed.

“You are hurt more than you say, Ellen,”

said Edward, looking at her ; “ you shall send us all off, and establish yourself on the sofa, and make old Madame Renardin descend from the upper regions, and bandage your wrist scientifically. But what have we here?—a barouche full of Beaumonts!—they see me; but never mind. Percival—rush to the head of the stairs, and call out to the porter—Not at home.”

“ Oh ! impossible, Edward ! if they have seen you ;—remember, they are country neighbours, and papa is very particular about them,” said Ellen.

“ Fly, Percival, fly !” repeated Edward ; “ and trust me, Ellen, to get you out of the scrape ; but keep out of sight, all of you ;” and he threw open the windows.

“ Ah, Mrs. Beaumont, how do you all do ? —not the worse for last night’s dissipation, I hope ? Miss Eliza Beaumont, this is really kind of you,—you are come to call upon *me*, of course.”

Eliza's answer was drowned in the noise of a passing dray-cart; but that it was alarmingly compliant, might be gathered from the addition which Mrs. Beaumont felt called upon to make.

“You brought that upon yourself, Mr. Glanville, for supposing such a thing to be possible.—Be quiet, Eliza, I don't approve of those kind of jokes, they are bad style.” These last words were uttered in a rapid aside, and she immediately resumed her colloquy with Edward. “You know very well what our errand here must be,—to have the pleasure of wishing Lady Ellen joy on the happy event just declared.”

“And you call it a happy event to me, a younger brother! Oh, Mrs. Beaumont! I had expected better things from your friendship; but it is very inconsiderate of Ellen not to be in the way to receive congratulations. Where

can she be? Do you happen to have been to the Harrisons?"

"No," answered Mrs. Beaumont, instantly taking the alarm; "but we are going straight from here. I saw some of the family this morning, and understood they were coming here; but perhaps they were expecting Lady Ellen there. Good morning, Captain Glanville; we will not keep you standing at the open window. Pray offer our good wishes to Lord Mordaunt. —John, drive to Mrs. Harrison's. Eliza, I wish you would lean back quietly, like your sisters,—you have bent my bonnet by poking forwards so."

"Mamma, I was only answering Captain Glanville; he had evidently a great deal more he wanted to say to me, if we had not driven away in such a hurry."

"And mamma," added Maria; "I think it a mistake to follow Lady Ellen to the Harrisons. They will be so pleased, that we should find her sitting there ——"

“Nonsense, my dear,—the Harrisons called upon us last; I should have gone there to-day at all events, and Lady Ellen may not be there after all. What a very selfish young man Mr. Glanville must be, to speculate upon his poor brother’s death, and to wish him not to marry.”

“That was a joke, mamma,” said Eliza. “Mamma always will take things in such a matter-of-fact way,”—she whispered to Anne, who only answered by a silent shrug of her shoulders. She was the youngest of the three, and but just come out; and when her eldest sisters were present, seldom committed herself by uttering an opinion.

“Now that’s what I call cleverly done of me,” said Edward, after watching them till they were out of sight; “and at no decided expense of truth,—an economy seldom met with in this precious world we live in, and praiseworthy in a person given to what is called wanton expenditure. Do not look grave, Ellen; I am a

model of prudence now. These very gloves I am now drawing on, I paid ready money for this morning; and no such thing as a single knock is ever heard at my door——” He was interrupted by Percival, who, as he took leave, said something of returning in the evening, if the house should be up in time, to inquire after Ellen. Edward promised to come back to dinner, and looked at his sister, as if he expected her to second his invitation to Lord Raymond to join them; but she was silent, and with only one serious parting look he too left her.

CHAPTER V.

Suspicion, entering with a serpent's fang,
Poisons the healthy mind. A jaundiced eye
Henceforth will look upon each trifling act,
And turn it into evil.

Look on her, mark her well,—be but about
To say, *she is a goodly lady*, and
The justice of your hearts will thereto add—
'Tis *pity she's not honest—honourable*.

WINTER'S TALE.

THREE mornings passed without any farther tidings from Lindsay; the fourth brought a letter, announcing his arrival for the following day. The concluding sentence delighted Edward; it related entirely to Miss Spencer,—her beauty,—her singular attractions, and the great advantage that Ellen would derive from the society of such a companion. It was alto-

gether a very lover-like sentence. Edward thought that he could trace a proper degree of exaggeration, both in sentiments and expressions;—with all his practice, he had seldom run off anything better himself;—he had now well-founded hopes of seeing Lindsay really and servilely in love.

He and Ellen were dawdling over the luncheon table, in momentary dread of the appearance of Charles Dalrymple, who was inflicting a dutiful visit upon poor Lord Mordaunt, when Elizabeth walked into the room, unaccompanied by her husband.

“My dear Elizabeth,” said Ellen, “have you been down stairs with papa? they only told me that Mr. Dalrymple was with him, or I should have joined you long ago.”

“Mr. Dalrymple was there,” said Elizabeth; “but I could not persuade him to come up to you. Hearing, Edward, that you were in the house, he expected that you might perhaps

take the trouble to walk down stairs to see him: that you should walk the length of three streets, is an honour we have long ceased to hope for."

"Now, Elizabeth, this is very unfair. I spend all my idle moments at your door; but your man has a spite against me,—he will not let me in, and he will not mention my visits. I have long looked upon myself as a very ill-used man, that Dalrymple should have returned so few of them,—for I am very punctilious about these small matters myself."

"Very," said Ellen, laughing.

"The world belies you much, if it is at my door your idle moments are spent," pursued Elizabeth. "I have heard that there is one in Park Lane, through which you do not find it so difficult to make an entrance."

"What! at my little friend, Mrs. Howard's? Yes, I do go there most days,—I confess to that. She is a very nice pretty little woman; with her

black sparkling eyes, and white glittering teeth ; and I am glad you happened to mention her. It reminds me that I meant to ask you to leave a card upon her. It would be very well taken, for she knows very few people in London.” Having given Elizabeth this encouraging assurance, Edward coolly resumed his occupation, of swallowing plovers’ eggs.

“ Thank you,” said Elizabeth indignantly ; “ but I have not the smallest inclination to find myself a component part of the Howard set. I was astonished to see them here the other night. After all, who are the Howards ? and why are we all to be forced into an acquaintance with them ?”

“ Who are the Howards ! Faith you puzzle me now,” said Edward. “ Ellen, dear ; put these things out of my reach : I cannot stop eating them. Who are the Howards ? that is such a difficult question. Who is any body ? Who are the Glanvilles ? Who are the Dalrymples,

but just their ownselves? They must have had fathers and mothers like other people, I suppose. Every body must be somebody. As to forcing you into an acquaintance with them, Elizabeth, I assure you I have no plot of that kind; but I thought that you would find her an acquisition at your dinner parties;—she is pleasant and lively, and would help them off amazingly.”

“And are you to run up an intimacy with these people, Ellen?” said Elizabeth, not deigning to answer him.

“Am I, Edward?” said Ellen.

“That will depend entirely upon yourself. I half promised to take you to see them some morning, and came here now to ask you to walk there with me. They were so kind to me, when I was quartered at I——, I am anxious to shew them some civility. Have you any objection to go with me?”

Ellen looked timidly at Elizabeth, who reso-

lutely kept silence ; but there was an expression of cold irony on her countenance, which was anything but encouraging.

“ My dear Ellen,” Edward added, half impatiently,—“ if there were any reason against your making their acquaintance, can you imagine I should propose taking you there ?”

Ellen immediately left the room to prepare for the walk ; and Edward, launching out upon another subject, contrived to keep the conversation till the servant announced the arrival of Elizabeth’s carriage, into which, with much civility, and more satisfaction, he handed her, and saw her drive off.

Ellen joined him, looking so fresh,—so brilliant,—it was with a feeling of natural pride that he drew her arm through his. He enjoyed the evident admiration she excited, when they walked together ; and she was neither ignorant of, nor unelated by it.

It is all nonsense to talk of the unconscious-

ness of admiration : no beautiful woman is, or can be unconscious of it : none but a cold woman can be indifferent to it. There must be something satisfactory to her in finding that the first impression she makes upon her fellow-creatures is a pleasing one,—that she has only to cultivate favourable prepossessions,—not to fight her way against coldness or prejudice. Some plodding people, in unwonted moments of enthusiasm, have found themselves wishing that Heaven had made them great politicians, or great heroes, or great orators. I should have been content had Heaven made me a great beauty : and I would have ruled politicians, and heroes, and orators too.

Now Elizabeth was gone, Edward's fit of reserve vanished, and he at once began to talk to Ellen of the origin of his intimacy with the Howards. When upon a visit to them some months before, he had been confined to his room from illness,—the consequence of a ne-

glected fall, while hunting. Had he been at home, he could not have been nursed with greater kindness. The visit, which was to have lasted a few days, was necessarily prolonged for as many weeks. Their house was within a short distance of the town where his regiment was quartered; and when upon his recovery he rejoined it, a visit to Howard Lodge was a constant resource to him in his daily rides. He did not know what absurd notions Elizabeth had got in her head about Mrs. Howard. She was a very good little woman,—doating upon her husband, who was a virtuous bore; and upon her children, who were little unfledged monsters. At first he was afraid she was too domestic for him to endure; but he found that the cares of a family had failed to crush her natural gaiety and cleverness. She would fearlessly tell him of his faults, and laugh at his follies,—and ridicule his over-refinements; and from her he bore this well.

He was amused by her originality, and grateful for the interest she evidently felt for him. She had never lived in that artificial world of fashion, where the opinions of the few govern despotically those of the many.

In the beginning of their acquaintance, she puzzled Edward, by meeting his frequently repeated assertions,—“Everybody thinks this,” —“Everybody does that,”—by the simple questions, “But what do you think? Why should you do as they do?” He grew ashamed of answering that he had adopted the ready-made opinions—that he had followed the path chalked out for him by others. While he was at Howard Lodge, he actually learned to think and act for himself.

“And Miss Rivers—?” Ellen asked.

“Harriet Rivers was not there. I never saw her till the other day,” was the only answer she received; but the tone of his voice was constrained.

Ellen’s next question was unheard, and he

fell into a state of abstraction,—which, following her usual rule, of waiting for confidence, not pressing for it, she did not interrupt, till they arrived at the Howards' door.

They were instantly admitted, and Elizabeth would have trembled, could she have witnessed the air of pleasure and alacrity with which the very servant preceded Edward to the drawing-room, and how the black eyes of the lady sitting there sparkled at their approach.

“There,—that will do,—go, dears,—go!” said Mrs. Howard, turning her children out at one door, as her visitors entered at the other. “‘Now Richard’s himself again.’ What a relief—just as I was set in for a hard morning’s work at their infant minds.”

Ellen said something civil about wishing to be allowed a sight of them.

“No, Lady Ellen,—you are very kind,—but I will not inflict so great a punishment upon us both, as to call them back. I hope that I

am not an unnatural mother; but I own I do think that when visitors—especially pleasant visitors—are in my room, children, even my own children, are better out of it. Little chattering torments! drowning all one's best remarks, and listening to all they are not meant to hear. I remember my own childhood, and the childhood of all my small contemporaries,—now grown up into valuable members of society, like myself. We lived among nurses and nursery-maids,—wore muslin spencers,—ate nothing for dinner but shoulders of mutton,—and once a year, for a treat, were taken out in the carriage. Now children talk, dress, feed, visit like little men and women. We all served a long apprenticeship before we were admitted to the full privileges of society; and I cannot submit to be jostled out of them by infants who can scarcely speak their sovereign wills articulately.”

“ Bless me ! ” said Edward ; “ what has

happened? Poor Charles and Betsy! what have they done, that all your maternal feelings are thus turned to bitterness and gall?—or has that little lump of original sin, my god-child, knocked down his nurse with the rattle I gave him yesterday?”

“ I was not speaking of my own children—I play the tyrant with them, and keep them in their proper places—I only warn you generally, that this juvenile influence increases alarmingly, and that if a stand is not made against it, society will be spoiled. At this moment I have a note in my hand from a lady, an intimate friend, who, for many years, has been pressing us to pay her and her husband a visit of some weeks. At last I succeeded in persuading Mr. Howard to make the exertion of moving, and wrote to offer ourselves for three days. I promised him an answer, full of rapture and gratitude. Here it is. She is very sorry that it should be so—the only three

days we could spare—but her little boys are at home for the holidays, and she has made a rule to receive no company then, as she finds it disturbs their enjoyment, and all the servants are wanted to play at cricket with them—any other time she would be charmed—and so on. Now I appeal to you, Lady Ellen, is not this an alarming state of things?”

“It is, indeed,” said Ellen, laughing: “and, now I recollect, I had this afternoon sad confirmation of the truth of your fears. Lady Hamilton was to have taken me a drive; she just now sent to make her excuse, as her own coachman was not well, and she did not like to deprive her children of theirs, and make them miss their usual airing.”

“The children’s coachman! and the eldest of them not five years old! I meet them every day walking in the park, looking like little extinguishers, in velvet pelisses, made by Maradan, their carriage following, and a tall foot-

man behind them. Well, it is a wise world we live in ! I will say no more about it—I will not go on ‘ravelling out the weaved-up follies’ of others—while you, Mr. Glanville, are ravel-ling out what I mean to be the sleeve of Charly’s frock. It is clear that we cannot meddle with what does not belong to us without doing mischief. Give me the sleeve, and let me set to work, and feel that I am doing something useful.”

Miss Rivers at this moment opened the door. Upon seeing visitors, she seemed inclined to retreat ; but her aunt stopped her, and asked, whether she was still so confused by all the new faces she had seen the night before, as to have forgotten Lady Ellen ?

“ Having once seen Lady Ellen, I am in no danger of forgetting her,” was Harriet’s answer ; and slightly returning her bow and smile, she walked to the other end of the room, seated herself at her embroidery frame, and

bending over her work, seemed unconscious of any other claim upon her attention. The few words she had uttered might have been complimentary, but there was something in their tone which repelled Ellen. She repressed the gay answer that was rising to her lips, and once more settled, that Miss Rivers was very cold, and very disagreeable, and that she never could like her.

Mrs. Howard, who was evidently proud of her niece, made several attempts to induce her to join in the conversation, but it was not to be. The replies she received were as short as civility could make them.

Miss Rivers scarcely raised her eyes from her employment, and was clearly determined to hazard no remark of her own. "She is only very stupid," thought Ellen; but the intellectual expression of the beautiful profile she glanced at, making that conclusion unsatisfactory, she wisely determined to think no

more upon the subject. Five minutes after, her attention was awakened by an incident, which, to say the least of it, was puzzling.

She had risen to take leave, and while listening to Mrs. Howard's parting civilities, she had almost unconsciously fixed her eyes upon a pier-glass opposite, which gave her a view of Harriet Rivers. Edward had sauntered towards her, and was bending down, as if to admire her work. Suddenly he gave a glance towards the part of the room where Ellen was standing—her back was towards him.

These same pier-glasses are dangerous articles of furniture. They are the most arrant spies and tell-tales in the world, and so revenge themselves upon those who dare forget their existence. Even to their devotees, who day by day consult them, their cold surfaces can shadow forth unpleasant truths. The destroying hand of Time, the ravages of grief, the convulsions of anger—have they not all been reflected

there, and startled the victims, who, in that momentary gaze, have woke to a full perception of their power?

Ellen, though, had no cause for quarrel with them. She had never yet found fault with the tale they had told her; why should she start now, and with a look of deep vexation turn away? She had seen—she could not be mistaken—a letter, a sealed letter in Edward's hand. It was hastily placed upon the frame, and as hastily concealed by some work which Harriet threw over it. One glance of bright, blushing intelligence she gave him, and was again steadily employed, to all appearance the same cold, unimpassioned being as before.

All had passed in a moment, but it was a moment which gave Ellen thoughts for many a bitter hour. That Edward should deceive her—Edward, who, whatever were his other faults, she had always considered as the truest, the frankest, of human beings! she could not bear

the thought.—“ I never saw Harriet Rivers till yesterday ;” these were his very words ; and yet a mutual understanding subsisted between them, a clandestine correspondence was established ! That look ! that letter ! For a moment, as the only natural or satisfactory way of settling her mind, Ellen persuaded herself she had fancied both ; but no ! she had seen them too plainly. Elizabeth was right ; the Howards were not people with whom she should form an intimacy ; Edward ought not to have taken her there. Then Elizabeth’s insinuations respecting Mrs. Howard occurred to her. Could the letter have been meant for her ? and Miss Rivers, was she the ready and convenient confidante ?

Ellen’s imagination had never reached to such a pitch of depravity before, and she positively reproached herself for letting such thoughts come into her head ; and about Edward too ! what could have come over her ?

She would tell him what she had seen, and ask for an explanation ; it would be the easiest thing in the world to do ; and so she looked up to begin, and then she found her throat was dry, and her voice would sound constrained, and her heart began to beat so fast, she had no breath for a long sentence. But as he looked as if he expected she should say something, she did say, " What a pretty horse that is !" And he answered, " Just the sort of horse all women admire, with a long back, and a long tail, and an ugly head." And with this very satisfactory conclusion to their walk, they reached home, and Edward left her.

CHAPTER VI.

Not the least amusing traits of English provincial society, are the modifications which we daily meet with amid the squirearchy of England, of the Border feuds, or, to write more classically, the envying, hatred, and malice of the Montagues, and Capulets of county rivalry.

Views of English Life and Manners.

WEDNESDAY arrived ; a day of deep humiliation to the Beaumonts, of modest triumph to the Harrisons. Lord Lindsay was known to be in London. John happened to be passing through Grosvenor Square at the very moment when a travelling carriage and four drove up to the door ; he guessed directly that it must be Lindsay, shook hands with him, and thought that he looked uncommonly well ; but he was in

a hurry to see his father, which was very natural; so there was no time for conversation, otherwise John would have wished him joy on his marriage. However, there would be opportunity enough for that in the evening, now it was certain that he would be at the party.

All this was communicated to the Beaumonts by Kate Harrison, who had walked to Baker Street early, in the hope, as she told them, of hearing that the much-wished-for invitation had arrived. Two days before, when the matter seemed growing desperate, it had been thought better that the mortifying truth should be told; and nothing could be more friendly than the excess of sympathy which the Harrisons had shown.

Every member of the family had repeatedly declared that they were particularly vexed it should have happened on this Wednesday, as it was very likely to be the best party of the season. Julia constantly agreed with Eliza,—in

very much the tone with which mad people are soothed,—that it was undoubtedly a mistake; that it was impossible to suppose, though certainly it looked like it, that Lady Ellen could mean to leave them out upon such an occasion. Mrs. Harrison was not wanting in her consolations to Mrs. Beaumont. If they were not asked this Wednesday, they might rely upon it they would be some other; she had constantly observed, that there was a something, a sort of smart look about Kate and Julia, which made people anxious to have them at their small parties; and, after all, if every body were asked, they would no longer be small.

Even Mr. Harrison put out a good natured word, as he passed through his daughters' room, in his way to attend a Westminster meeting.

“So, young ladies, you hear that these foolish girls have persuaded me to go to this affair at Mordaunt House to-night, that I may have a

sight of my Lord Lindsay's fair choice. Ah ! Miss Eliza, when you are sitting snugly at home, you may pity an old fellow like me, kept till day-light from his comfortable nest."

"Then I wonder you go," was Maria's kind remark.

To all this Eliza had but one answer:—she was sure that it was a mistake; perhaps they had not meant to ask all the family again; but knowing, as Lady Ellen must, how very much Captain Glanville preferred talking to her, it was not very likely that she should be left out; she almost doubted whether it would not be better to go; it would spare Lady Ellen all the trouble of making apologies. That idea, however, met with no encouragement; and, to do Maria justice, she vehemently exclaimed against such a prostration of dignity, as going unasked.

"After all," said Eliza, as she shook hands with Kate, preparatory to her departure, "I

do not much care; this party will be very much like any other, though we have talked ourselves into thinking it of consequence. I am only sorry for them when they find out what a mistake they have made—they will be so shocked—in fact,” with a deep sigh, “I do not care at all.”

“Come, come, Miss, that’s too good to pass,” said Charles, looking up from his holiday task; “when we all know that you have sat with the door ajar, for the last week, and have rushed to the head of the stairs whenever there was a ring, in hopes of smelling out an invitation.”

“What vulgar expressions boys do pick up at school!” said Eliza.

“Yes; and what provocations boys are at all times!” added Maria.

“It is very true, though, for all that,” persisted Charles; “so do not be taken in, Kate.”

“There now, look; only do look!” exclaimed Eliza; “there is a Mordaunt servant crossing

the street; I know the livery; I think it is John, the one who always goes behind the carriage; there—he is coming straight to our house; and he has got a card in his hand;—now listen—yes—there is the ring; I knew that we were meant to be asked all the time; you know I said it was a mistake,—I am glad that the card is come, just to prove that I was right.”

“And now,” said Maria to Kate, whose countenance was visibly clouded; “you will be able to carry home the gratifying intelligence you came for.”

“Yes; and I will mention how philosophically Eliza bears this sudden rise of good fortune.”

In the mean time, the house-door had been heard to open — shut — the Mordaunt servant had been seen to re-cross the street without the card; and Eliza was secretly wondering why Harding, who knew her anxiety, did not make his appearance.

“ Now, I will take compassion on you,” said Charles, “ I will do the good-natured thing by you, though you do not deserve it; I see that you are dying to have the card in your own possession; I will run and fetch it.”

“ Do; that’s a good boy; we will go early, I think, Eliza,” said Maria. “ I shall like to see the Raymonds make their entrées.”

At this moment Charles was heard on the stairs laughing violently.

“ I wish, Charles,” said Eliza, with secret misgiving, “ that you would make haste, and shut the door, and not make such a noise.”

“ Oh! it will be the death of me,” answered Charles; “ such a cut up—such a defeat—why, you poor neglected creatures, the card is only for Dick: look—Mr. Richard Beaumont.”

“ Well, put down the card quietly, cannot you?” said Maria: “ in a small London house boys are really quite unbearable.”

“ It is not my fault if Lady Ellen does not

choose to ask you," returned Charles, " so you need not be so snappish."

" Good-bye," said Kate, " I am very sorry for this disappointment; but, at all events, Eliza, it must be a satisfaction to you to know, that you are not staying at home in consequence of a mistake."

" I am glad she is gone!" exclaimed Maria. " I am so tired of her eternal talking about that stupid party. If her head is so turned that she can speak of nothing else, she had better stay at home. I am quite determined that I will not ask a single question about it to-morrow, just to show that I think it of no consequence."

Eliza agreed with her, that would be the best thing to do: still, when she found, the next morning, that her mother was going to walk to Harley Street, she thought it as well to go with her, and see how they all looked. It was a great relief to her to find that Maria did not mean to accompany them, after having so

rashly seconded the determination to maintain their dignity at the expense of their curiosity; she felt that her presence would have been a restraint; for, after all, she must own she was anxious to know how the evening went off.

The Harrisons were quite ready, with or without encouragement, to give her any information. It had been altogether a very brilliant affair—much the most brilliant they had ever seen in that house. They had arrived very early. Mrs. Harrison had counted but four shawls and two cloaks in the room down stairs. She had wanted to wait there a little, but John had said, “so intimate as they were with the family, that would be ridiculous;” so they went up stairs; and very lucky it was they did, for the very next party who came in were the Raymonds. Lord Lindsay had evidently been dining with them, for they all came together; Miss Spenser leaning upon his arm. She disappointed them sadly—pretty—just pretty—

that was all. John had been quite vexed to see how his friend Lindsay had thrown himself away. Her manner,—but, in fact, she had no manner, she was so shy and frightened. When the old lord came forward, in his old-fashioned way, and took her hand and kissed it, she seemed ready to sink into the earth; and then Lady Ellen made her come and stand by her, and introduced Mr. Percival to her, just as if he were one of the family; so that marriage would probably soon be settled, if it were not already.

John thought that, considering his friendship with Lindsay, Lady Ellen might as well have introduced him too; but, at times, she certainly showed a strange want of consideration. Kate had overheard Mr. Dalrymple observe the same thing to Lady Elizabeth, as Lady Ellen brushed past old Mrs. Dalrymple, without seeming to see her.

Lady Elizabeth looked very fine and dis-

agreeable, as usual. When Julia, only by way of saying something civil, told her how pretty they all thought Miss Spencer, she answered quite in a sneering way, "Of course, all people going to be married look very pretty; you have said the right thing about her:"—just as if Julia had no opinion of her own! so insolent!

Mr. Glanville was flirting most abominably with that little Mrs. Howard. Mrs. Harrison thought it very odd of Lady Ellen to ask her and her grand-looking niece,—people nobody seemed to know. She did not think that Lady Elizabeth looked very pleased to see them. Eliza could not believe what Mrs. Harrison said of Captain Glanville. It was his way to talk only to married women: except to herself, she did not believe he ever spoke to any of the young ladies about the world;—and certainly, the Wednesday before, when *she* was there, he did not seem to remember that Mrs.

Howard was in the room ; so she did not suppose that there was much in that.

Lord Lindsay was pronounced to be very much in love, and travelled across the room to fetch Miss Spenser a glass of lemonade ; and when she complained of the heat, threw open a window himself—it was a great deal for him to do. There was no doubt that he would make an excellent husband.

Lord Raymond had puzzled them all. He looked absolutely bored and annoyed with the whole business. When Mr. Percival called to him to come and join them, he answered quite shortly, that he had rather be excused from obtruding upon a family party ; and instead of laughing, when Edward said that he forgot they were all brothers-in-law, or something like it, he looked quite gloomy, threw himself upon a sofa, and hardly spoke to any body all the evening. It was very odd, such a great mar-

riage as it was for his sister. He must be difficult, indeed, if he were not pleased with it.

“And now, Maria,” said Eliza, after having given her, in this condensed form, all the information she had gathered in the course of her visit, “I have made an immense discovery. I am sure that there is something particular going on about Kate Harrison. I do believe there is a flirtation.”

“And what on earth can make you fancy such a thing as that?” exclaimed Maria. “I do not believe one word of it. You cannot suspect anybody of having fallen in love with Kate!”

“It does seem very odd, to be sure;—but they have been out a great deal lately, at little odd out-of-the-way parties, in a set we know nothing of—quite below ours; and I suspect they are cooking up a marriage for Kate. She said that she was bored at Mordaunt House last night—that she had rather have

been at Mrs. Bernard's, in Russell-square. Now that, you know, was so strange, there must have been a reason for it. By-the-bye, we must scrape acquaintance with that woman somehow. She is always giving little dances. If the Harrisons were not so jealous of our knowing their friends, they would introduce us; but all the useful ones they keep to themselves."

"Well, but about Kate?" interrupted Maria; "is that the only reason you have for thinking that she has something going on?"

"Oh! no,—all through the visit there were jokes and allusions, which I could not understand, and they all seemed to refer to Kate—why she liked going to one place, and why she did not like going to another; and when she declared that she would stay at home to-night—for the others are actually to be out again, the third night running, which is much more than we should like to do—John said,

quite loud, ‘So *he* will not be there—is that it, Kate?’ And Julia told him very sharply, not to talk nonsense. If it had not been true, she would not have minded. I wonder who it can be—somebody, probably, who has never seen us.”

“I do not believe there is anybody so utterly devoid of taste. I am sure I should be very glad if there were—so anxious as Kate and Julia are to be married. But I cannot believe it; they only wanted to make you think so. You know you are very easily taken in, Eliza. If I had been there, I would have shewn that I saw through them; but they would not have tried that sort of trick upon me.”

Maria had very early been self-elected as the clever one of the family. For a time her sisters had made faint struggles to maintain something like equality; but Maria’s unaffected surprise, when they ventured to form a different opinion from herself, was so great—her retorts

to anything like contradiction so bitter—her belief that every thing in the family was carried on through her advice was so sincere—they soon felt the uselessness of trying to deny a superiority so well established.

Even Mr. and Mrs. Beaumont had adopted Maria's views of herself. They constantly declared that she was all in all to them—that they could not get on without her. Maria well understood the art of making the most of the superficial knowledge and the few accomplishments she possessed. Her sisters never dreamed of coming forward in competition with her.

In short, perseverance and assertion, which will carry most points in the world, had done their duty by Maria, and she was wholly established in the Beaumont set, as the clever Miss Beaumont, and altogether a most superior young woman.

Anne, who had been silently copying music

at the other end of the room, now ventured to join in the conversation.

“I should not wonder,” she timidly began, “if what Eliza suspects should be true. Kate always looks so happy now.”

“My dear Anne,” said Maria, “how can you possibly be qualified to judge upon the subject—you, who have only been out twice in the world? It is too ridiculous—you had better not talk about what you can know nothing of. You will only expose yourself.”

“I only meant to say, Maria,” rejoined Anne, looking ready to cry, and resuming her employment, “that Kate looks very happy sometimes.”

“Well, you have said that once already. You have got into a way of being so positive and contradictory, it is quite unpleasant; and then you look red and angry if any body ventures to disagree with you. You must really, Anne, try to control your temper a little.

There can be no conversation when you are constantly contradicting every thing every body says."

"She was agreeing with me"—a mixture of gratitude and justice compelled Eliza to begin ; but she was stopped by a look from Maria, who, in a dignified aside, begged she would not encourage Anne in her faults. She then pronounced that it was time to dress, and the two younger sisters, after exchanging a look, followed her out of the room.

CHAPTER VII.

“ Women, born to be controlled,
Stoop to the forward and the bold.
Man’s beau ideal of the softer sex,
Is gentle meekness, sweet simplicity.”

THE day fixed for Lindsay’s marriage was fast approaching, and Ellen’s time was completely devoted to the service of her future sister-in-law. At first, she too had been disappointed in her appearance. Her countenance had a pretty gentle expression, that was all — as Elizabeth said. In a room full of Miss

Browns and Miss Jenkins's, Mary would not have looked out of her place. There was nothing remarkable about her. She was very shy too—very difficult to get on with. She scarcely spoke, except when Lindsay was in the room: then she would smile sweetly, and agree with all he said. Even if she gathered courage to address any one else, she would glance towards him with the air of a frightened child, who is doubtful if it is not saying something wrong.

Ellen sate and wondered how Lindsay could be satisfied with such a companion—how he, who might have chosen from among the fairest and the greatest, had fixed upon one who had so little striking or attractive about her. When she heard him talk of consulting Mary about this, of taking her opinion about that, she hoped that he really believed that she had one to offer, and could scarcely refrain from smiling at the careless manner in which

he submitted their future arrangements to her ready approval. She could only suppose that he found something gratifying, in having a sort of moral slave, whom he might depend upon, for assuring him that all he thought, and said, and did, was right. Still, much as men delight in having their natural superiority acknowledged, he surely might have ventured to assert his over a less humble subject.

A few days' farther intimacy sufficed to convince Ellen that she had done Mary injustice. There was certainly something graceful in every thing she did. Her hands and feet were the smallest and prettiest that ever were seen. As her fear of Ellen wore off, she grew more open and animated. Once or twice, when some of Edward's wild remarks had startled her into a laugh, she looked like a different creature.

Ellen was touched too at the unaffected humility with which she spoke of her happy

prospects—of the kindness with which she had been received by *his* family.

“You cannot tell,” she said one morning, when she and Ellen were left together, “what I felt when I began to believe it possible that Lord Lindsay could distinguish me. It was at Madam d’Enville’s that I first met him. Mamma used to go there almost every evening. I believe it was against the rules of the society to admit any unmarried women; but as I was *une étrangère*, an exception was made in my favour, and there I sat by the corner of the *ecarté* table, listening to the conversation that went on round me. Oh! how sleepy I sometimes used to be. There was old Madam de Jarnac, who had long stories about her sainted martyr, the Duc de Berri; and Mons. de Cornice, who recited *petits vers* of his own composing—all ending in compliments to the Dame de la Maison. There was the Comte de Bedmar, who had once made a tour in Scotland, and who always

talked to mamma, about *cette belle ville d'Edinburgh*, where we had never been. There were Madame de Balzac, with her little dog — Mons. de Saltzer, with his long white hair, and his young wife. There were more too, some very clever, I believe; at least I could not understand half that they talked about.”

“And for that reason you settled that they were clever. How good-natured of you,” said Ellen. “But, Lindsay,—tell me when you first made acquaintance with him, and how it was all settled? Did he fall in love at first sight?”

“Oh! no, he was there very often, before he seemed to find out that I was in the room; but he talked a great deal to mamma, and I listened to him, till I forgot all those tiresome French people. I have lived so little in England, it was such a pleasure to hear all he said about it. He saw how attentive I was; and when mamma went back to *ecarté*, he talked

on to me—sometimes about dear Raymond ; but generally about himself. How proud I was that he should take the trouble.”

Ellen could not help smiling.

“ But I want to know, Mary, when he first began to talk to you about yourself?”

“ I scarcely know. I do not think that he ever did much. But one evening, after he had described Mordaunt Castle to me, and the sort of life he liked to lead there, and had told me how many months of the year he meant to pass in London, and how many in the country,—he went on to say, that it had always been his intention to marry before he was thirty—that he thought, with his prospects, he ought to do so; and then he asked me, whether I approved of the life he had been describing? And then he said little more to me: but the next day he spoke to mamma, and told her that I was just the sort of wife he should wish for—my disposition seemed to coincide so en-

tirely with his ; and mamma was delighted—so then every thing was settled.”

“ You had no doubts, Mary ? you were quite prepared for this declaration of Lindsay’s ? ”

“ No, indeed ; if once or twice the thought had crossed me, I was ashamed of my own presumption. As to doubts ! Lady Ellen,—you who know how perfect Lindsay is, how can you think that I doubted, when I was told that I could contribute to his happiness ? ”

Ellen had no more to ask ; she understood the whole affair at last. Lindsay had acted with his usual judgment. Having settled that the time was come when he should marry, he had chosen a wife who could in no way interfere with his comfort, and might possibly contribute to it. She would not be gay when he meant her to be grave ; she would not talk when he required her to be silent ; she would not even look handsome, if he wished her not to be admired ; still, as Lady Lindsay, she

would be gay enough, sensible enough, and pretty enough to be generally approved of, whenever he judged it necessary to advance her from her negative position, and allow her to take an active part in society.

Their *tête-a-tête* was interrupted by the entrance of Charles Dalrymple. It was an unusual hour for him to pay a visit; and Ellen felt sure that something must be amiss. He solemnly shook hands with her; bowed formally to Mary; rejected the vacant place on the sofa; drew in a small cane-chair, and sat down upon the edge of it, with his knees pressed together, his elbows stuck to his sides, his hands clasped, his mouth pinched, and his eyes half closed. His whole attitude expressed the extent of his wrongs; it seemed to say that while the storm was raging within, all should be calm and constrained without.

Upon Mary the effect was utterly thrown away; she did not consider herself as a party

concerned in his visit, so she sat placidly devoted to her tent-stitch, assiduously counting the threads.

Ellen made two or three attempts at conversation, which met with no encouragement; and she was beginning to wonder how the visit would end, when Edward walked into the room.

Since the day that they had walked together to Mrs. Howard's, she had seen less of him than usual; but whether because he was occupied about his own affairs, or simply that he was bored with the preparations for Lindsay's marriage, she could not tell. Whenever he did come, she fancied his spirits forced, and he had occasional fits of abstraction which were not natural to him. His manner to herself was kind and affectionate as ever; but each seemed to feel there were subjects of deeper interest than those they talked of, which neither cared to approach. Ellen thought of his early extravagance, and trembled as she feared he

might have involved himself in fresh difficulties. His liaison too, with the Howards, amazed her — she could not make it out.

He made no secret of his daily visits there. Once or twice Ellen had asked him questions about Miss Rivers, in hopes of getting an answer that would explain the mystery of the letter; but he persisted in talking of her as one whose beauty he admired, but with whom he was scarcely acquainted; and when she ventured, half laughingly, to wonder whether Mr. or Mrs. Howard were indebted to him for such constant attentions, he only answered by referring her to Elizabeth. Ellen could do no more. By this time she knew enough of human nature to be aware, that in such matters, uncalled-for interference does more harm than good.

At one time she had determined, if possible, to break off all acquaintance with the Howards; but it seemed as if, by some fatality, she was always to meet them. Into whatever house she

went, there was Mrs. Howard and her niece before her. Harriet's beauty had been their passport into society; and Mrs. Howard's popularity was soon very decided. She had, in perfection, the art of saying agreeable things to every body: if it were flattery, it was certainly the most natural flattery that ever won the heart and soothed the vanity of the listener. After all, instead of expressing more than she felt, she merely suppressed half;—all that was disagreeable she kept to herself. She had her reward, not only in being liked almost as soon as known, but in thinking much better of her fellow-creatures than they deserved:—by never talking of their faults, she almost forgot that they had any.

Ellen wished that she could feel more charitably; but she did not know how it was—she positively disliked them all. She really recoiled from the sight of little Mrs. Howard, flying about, full of smiles and vivacity; Miss Rivers

receiving the homage of her many worshippers, with the air and manner of an empress; and Mr. Howard, fat and complacent, taking up the space which might have been better filled by a worse man: for worth, mere simple worth, is sadly thrown away in a room full of people, met together for no other purpose than to amuse and outshine each other.

She had seriously considered whether she could avoid asking them to her second party; but the matter had been set at rest by Edward, who informed her that she need take no trouble about it, as he had told them the day for which it was fixed, and that she would expect them. He seemed so persuaded Ellen would be delighted to have them, that she had not had the heart to undeceive him. Besides, she had some curiosity to see him again in their society, and could foresee no other opportunity. It was strange; but since they had appeared in the London world, Edward had quite retired from

it. He suddenly professed to be bored to death with everything in the shape of wholesale society. But from his father's house he could not absent himself; and, as the Harrisons had reported, that evening he devoted himself entirely to Mrs. Howard.

Ellen was quite provoked with him. As to Elizabeth, she could afford to be merciful: their talking so much together was very wrong, but it proved that her opinion was very right. She took the consolatory line with Ellen, and told her that though this history of Edward's was the talk of the room, there was no use in fretting about it;—having brought the acquaintance upon herself, she must now make the best of it.

Once, and but once, while Mrs. Howard was speaking to a passing acquaintance, Ellen had seen Edward lean across and address a few earnest words to Harriet Rivers. The answer was evidently but a single monosyllable, and

then a warning glance was directed towards Elizabeth, who was standing near. Ellen did not envy Miss Rivers her feelings,—she coloured so painfully when she perceived she was observed;—she could not pity her either,—she deserved to be made to feel uncomfortable,—she was undoubtedly playing a double part. Ellen had no patience with her.

Upon Edward's mind the events of the evening had evidently made no unpleasing impressions. He was now in wild spirits,—everything was prospering with him. He had taken the most delightful ride;—he had fallen in with all the people he wished to see;—they had all said pleasant things to him;—he was going to dine with a man who gave the best dinners in London; and he was now come to pass a comfortable hour with Ellen. “So now,” he said, laying his hand encouragingly upon the shoulder of his brother-in-law,—“now let us be merry, Charles, my jolly fellow.”

‘Charles, my jolly fellow,’ emitted a little sour laugh, which did not promise great things in the way of merriment; but Edward rallied on, encouraged by Ellen’s rejoinders, and Mary’s smiles, till at length he hit upon the spring which unlocked the fountain of Charles Dalrymple’s grief.

“And now, Ellen, give me a little domestic information. I choose to consider Mary above minding having the question asked before her, and I will word it very prettily. Does the day on which we are all to witness the confirmation of Lindsay’s happiness, still continue fixed for the 18th?”

“I am obliged to you, Edward, really obliged to you,” interposed Mr. Dalrymple, “for sparing me the mortification of asking that question myself. I, individually, had no reason to suppose that the 18th was even talked of. I assure you, I felt not a little awkward yesterday, when my mother asked me how soon

the happy event would take place,—to have to answer, ‘ my dear madam, not the slightest intimation of the time fixed, has been made to me.’ She lifted up her hands and eyes in astonishment. For the last five days, I have had my cards of invitation ready written for a large dinner it is incumbent upon me to give; but I have refrained from sending them out; for I felt, Ellen, that your sister would consider it due to appearances, however late the notice, to join the family circle upon such an occasion. I might have fixed upon the very day for my own party.”

“ Surely,” said Ellen, “ Elizabeth was present when we discussed all this the other day.”

“ Lady Elizabeth might have been in the room; so probably were Lady Hamilton, Mrs. Douglas, and forty others. I heard of no particular reference being made to Lady Elizabeth or myself. From general report, I merely ga-

thered that a day was fixed, and that the near connections of both families were to be asked. For some days I have made it my business to contradict this rumour. It cannot be true, I have constantly asserted. It is impossible to believe that in such a case my mother can be pointedly omitted."

Mary, as if she feared that Ellen and Edward must be quite overcome by the just severity of the attack, now looked up to make a diversion in their favour. "And how is Mrs. Dalrymple?" she inquired with an expression of great interest. "I am delighted to hear that she feels strong enough to venture out."

"I thank you, Miss Spencer, for the inquiry,—except a heavy cold, from which she suffered about a fortnight ago, when she first settled in town, I can pronounce her perfectly well."

"But surely," persisted Mary, hoping to soothe him by her sweetness,—“surely you had better persuade the dear old lady to stay at

home. I understand from Edward, that for some years she has only been fit to sit by the fireside."

Mr. Dalrymple reddened with anger. "I profess myself totally at a loss to understand Edward's meaning. If the assertion was made in joke, he must excuse my remarking that Mrs. Dalrymple is no fit subject for a joke;—if in earnest, there will be sufficient refutation in my simple assertion, that in our own county, where the family mansion is situated in the midst of a most gentlemanly neighbourhood, she has upon her book a list of fifty visits, out of which, nineteen are dining visits, subject of course to a moon."

While Mary was repeating the last words to herself, and was trying, in her ignorance of a country neighbourhood, to make out what influence the moon could have upon Mrs. Dalrymple's dinner, Edward stifled his laughter, and protested it was only with reference to her heavy

cold, that he hinted at her sitting over the fire. He then hastened to change the subject; and turning to Ellen, told her that he was afraid it was quite out of his power to stay in town till the 18th; he must rejoin his regiment almost immediately.

“How very unfortunate!” said Ellen. “I am sure that papa will be annoyed at your absence. I understood that you had leave for the next six weeks. What has made this sudden change? Try, Edward, if you cannot contrive to stay till after the marriage.”

“I must go, love! it is positively necessary that I should be at Liverpool by Friday.”

Edward looked confused, and drew Ellen towards him while he spoke, as if to beseech her forbearance. Lindsay's entrance to report progress about his new carriages, was evidently a relief to him. Charles Dalrymple was soothed by being consulted about the colour of the linings, and hastened home to Elizabeth, to beg

her not to worry, as she would the next morning be duly served with an invitation to the wedding dinner. Lord Lindsay and Mary walked off together to Lady Raymond's. Edward went to prepare for his engagement ; and Ellen was left alone.

CHAPTER VIII.

What fearful, and what curious mysteries,
Involve themselves in those strange histories,
Which to its own researches unrevealed,
Are deep within the human heart concealed.

MS. Poem.

FOR the next five minutes Ellen indulged in what has been termed "the luxury of thought;" an expression, the application of which is not seldom particularly foolish. Happiness is active and communicative; no very happy person has time or inclination to sit still and think; and if he had, five minutes spent in the enjoyment of this

same "luxury," even when following immediately the fulfilment of the brightest scheme of happiness the human mind has ever formed, throws some faint shades upon the picture, which deepen with every succeeding moment of inactivity, till the slumberer awakes from his reverie, a fresh instance of the truth of the assertion, that

"Wake, where'er he may,
Man wakes to care and evil."

Ellen was roused by the sound of a passing footstep, and, with a repugnance which is always most strongly felt by the most idle, to be found alone in a room doing nothing, she turned to the table and took up the newspaper. Percival's name, in the leading paragraph, was the first thing that caught her eye. It was written by no friendly hand; but while inveighing bitterly against the party of which he now formed an important member, even an adversary could not deny him the praise due to

talents, high and unquestionable. She turned to another side; again she met with the same name, "Mr. Percival now rose;" she glanced down the column;—"cheering!" "great cheering!" "loud and enthusiastic cheering, from all parts of the house!"

"And have I no enthusiasm,—no feeling," thought Ellen. "How proud,—how grateful I ought to be, that this gifted being should stoop to share every thought with one so unworthy; that he should devote the truest affection to one——" Another name now caught her eye; and the current of her thought was changed.

"Lord Raymond is returned to his house in Brook Street, from his seat in Hertfordshire."

"I cannot go out to-night," was the determination that followed. "Elizabeth must go to Almack's without me. They will *both* be there; and I am so tired, so weary of all these well-dressed people's faces——I am so weary of myself—talking to them as if I

should care if I were never to see one of their faces again;—laughing with them, as if one new idea were ever coined in their clock-work minds. I sometimes really think they are worked by machinery, or they could not all so exactly say the same things upon the same subjects. This evening I will be spared the sound and sight of them. How comfortable papa and I shall be together!”

The composition of her note to Elizabeth was rather difficult. It was mortifying for one who had just finished a soliloquy against all that was common-place, to be reduced to plead a headache as her excuse. However, while she wrote, she pressed her hand to her forehead, till she was almost persuaded it was the truth. She did not send her note till she had procured and enclosed a ticket for one of the Miss Dalrymples. Elizabeth was blessed with four very ugly sisters-in-law, whom she was often called upon to chaperon.

Mr. Dalrymple's wrath, at her defalcation, was something mollified by this attention. Still, he could not but think it a very strange proceeding. She appeared perfectly well when he was in Grosvenor Square; and Mrs. Dalrymple, who was dining with her son and daughter-in-law, assured them that it was very unnatural in a young person of eighteen or nineteen,—which was Lady Ellen?—to be so indifferent about balls; they might trust her experience, there was some reason for it. This was supposed to be the shrewdest remark that old Mrs. Dalrymple ever made.

In the meantime Ellen was looking forward to a quiet evening, with feelings of real enjoyment.

Lord Mordaunt, though easily fatigued in general society, could still apparently be interested in many of the passing events of the day. The apathy of age was slowly creeping upon him; but often the tact and shrewdness of

his remarks, when his attention was fairly engaged, would astonish those who, judging from the sunk, changeless expression of the still fine countenance before them, had fancied that the mind was sunk and darkened too. Ellen's love for her father stopped little short of adoration; she thought that no such perfect character had ever yet been seen upon this earth. His courteous manners to his equals; his considerate kindness to his inferiors; his fond affection for his children;—never had she known them fail; and now, as she sat working or reading by his side, she felt that the hours passed in striving to minister to his comfort and amusement were the happiest that she could know.

The time was come when irrational people get up from dinner, and rational people go to bed. Not that it is necessarily a sign of rationality to go to bed early; but it is an approved form of expression, which ought not to become obsolete, it is so useful to the numerous

class of idlers who, their time being burthensome to themselves and others, give relief to both, and almost fancy they perform a moral action, by retiring early to their pillows.

Ellen listened to the rolling of the carriages, as a traveller under shelter listens to the beatings of a storm. She knew the feverish, excited feelings, with which many were hastening to this place of amusement ; the flat, jaded spirits, with which yet more would return ; and she congratulated herself that this evening at least, nothing could happen to disturb her tranquillity.

“ We have seen little of Frederick lately,” said Lord Mordaunt ; “ but, I trust, when we are settled again at Mordaunt Castle, he will be able to extricate himself from all this political turmoil, and stay with us for a time. It seems long since he has been there, as an inmate.”

“ It does, indeed,” Ellen answered, and she

spoke from her very heart; she felt as if she had lived a long life since then.

Her father was struck by the tone of her voice, and pursued the subject. "I sometimes fear that Frederick's life is more confined than can be quite good for him. He is very young to be brought so forward; and I doubt whether, at his age, it is quite an advantage to have acquired so high a reputation. He will find difficulty in acting up to all that will be expected from him; and I know no man, who would feel any thing like disappointment more keenly than Frederick."

"He *would* feel keenly!" Ellen said, and again she paused.

"Under these circumstances we must try and be content for the present to have but little of his society. I sometimes wonder how he contrives to be here as often as he is. I hope, Ellen," continued Lord Mordaunt anxiously, "that you do not think that Frederick neglects us."

“That *he* neglects *us*—oh, no! no! I am not so unjust; I have only sometimes feared that he might think—that he might fancy—that we neglected him.”

Poor Lord Mordaunt looked aghast at such a charge. “My dear Ellen, what a strange idea! surely Frederick cannot wait to be pressed to come to a house which was so long a home to him? I would not, for the world, that he should be considered such a stranger, as to make a particular invitation necessary.”

“I did not mean to say that, papa. I ought not to have said *we* neglect him; I was thinking of myself when I spoke,” said Ellen, blushing deeply. “Since we came to London, I have been so constantly in society, so occupied in various frivolous ways, he must think me heartless, trifling, every way unlike the Ellen he knew at Mordaunt Castle.”

“You are not changed, my Ellen—Frederick cannot so misjudge my child. Neither

your head, nor your heart have been spoiled by admiration. Never have you neglected one duty, to follow your own amusement. This very evening have you not sacrificed it, to stay at home and listen to an old man's talk?"

Ellen moved to the footstool at her father's feet, and rested her forehead on his hand—"It is no sacrifice—I am happier here."

"My Ellen," said Lord Mordaunt anxiously, "I trust that there is no misunderstanding between you and Frederick. Dear as Lindsay and Edward are to me, they are scarcely more dear than he is. I would not have parted with him when I did, had I not felt that I hazarded his happiness by keeping him with me. Separated from his own family, his affections had no resting-place but with us. Child as you then were, already they centered upon you. Nay, do not start—you could not guess it, love—I question whether he even owned it, to himself. But I know Frederick's character well. Though

he may appear cold and calm, Edward's feelings are not more impetuous than his, and certainly not so deep. What was then a boyish fancy, would have ripened into an attachment, which might have cramped his energies, and overshadowed his future years. You had then no opportunity of comparing him with others. In ignorance and innocence, you would have encouraged this hopeless love—every way hopeless, for Frederick was almost a beggar. His fortunes have changed since then; but I am most thankful," Lord Mordaunt added, complacently, "that I acted as I did. I have saved Frederick from the misery he would have felt, if, having once fancied himself preferred, he had seen your affections gained by another."

Ellen did not raise her head, but almost inarticulately she repeated the word—"Another!"

"And is it not so, my Ellen; or can Lindsay be mistaken? Has Lord Raymond not de-

clared that he loves you? or does he love you in vain?"

"In vain, in vain—Lord Raymond does not, must not, love me," said Ellen, in a voice almost choked by agitation; for every word her father had spoken smote upon her heart. "His love would be vain, indeed, papa," she continued, more calmly. "I shall be better when I have told you all—when I have your forgiveness for this concealment. I am engaged—I have been long engaged to Frederick."

The words were spoken, and Ellen felt as if her fate were more surely fixed than ever. Her father heard her story. His ready forgiveness, his warm approval followed. Again, and again, he pressed her to his heart, and prayed that God might bless his child—and Ellen's tears flowed silently, and she prayed in silence too. Soon she looked up and smiled, as she told her father that he must not hope to get rid of her yet—that for many months she could not think

of leaving him. Frederick would not wish her to do so, till Lindsay and Mary should return.

“It is most kind of him,” Lord Mordaunt said. “The days that yet remain to me on earth are few. It would have grieved me to have parted with all my children. But, hark! there is some one come. I trust it is Frederick—I long to greet him as my son.”

“Oh! could I have been spared that meeting to-night,” thought Ellen; “but, perhaps, it is better; in a few moments he will know that we have my father’s consent—that my fate is irrevocably joined with his. If I have decided wrong, may God forgive me!”

It was not Frederick. The door opened, and Lord Raymond was announced. He had left the party at his mother’s house, expecting to find Lord Mordaunt alone. His meetings with Ellen lately had given him more pain than pleasure, and he returned to London, determined to avoid her as much as the present cir-

cumstances of the two families would allow. Mr. Dalrymple had met him in the morning, and told him, with his own peculiar felicity of expression, that Lady Elizabeth was to afford his fair sister-in-law the benefit of her matronly protection at Almacks.

Lord Raymond, therefore, tried to feel baffled and provoked, when he found Ellen quietly established by her father's side. There she sate, in her simple muslin dress, looking more like a thing of heaven than earth,—so soft and transparent was her beauty. In a moment she suppressed all outward signs of agitation; and the studied coldness with which he addressed her, melted away at the first low tones of that sweet voice. They talked fluently on indifferent subjects, till Lord Mordaunt, in the exuberance of his content, could not resist an allusion to Ellen's situation, which he felt secure could only be understood by himself and her.

“ You were surprised to find Ellen here,

Lord Raymond; and I assure you, that we were surprised when you walked in just now. We had partly expected Frederick Percival; but, I suppose, he is hard at work as usual. I ought to be proud that such a gay young man should give up his evening to me; and so I am both proud and glad of such an interruption. But Ellen and I have not been silent—have we, Ellen? After dinner she read loud to me last night's debate, and I find she is grown quite a keen politician. Frederick would have been flattered, if he could have seen the interest with which she followed up his arguments, and I could not even get her to finish the answer to them."

"I am afraid, papa," said Ellen, laughing, "that you will not give Lord Raymond much notion of the depth of my political knowledge; but I begin to believe, that in all cases it is best to hear only one side, it saves so much mental trouble."

“In the present case, at least, you acted kindly towards Percival’s rival,” Lord Raymond answered with bitterness. “He could have found no impartial judge in you.”

“I own it,” answered Ellen coldly; “and surely it is natural that the words of one, whose character I have long known and admired, should have more weight with me than those of a comparative stranger.”

“True, most true, it were madness to think otherwise—even a rival must feel, that Percival is worthy of all the sentiments he excites. *He* must be presumptuous, indeed, who could hope to equal him.”

Lord Raymond having uttered these words, rose abruptly, and took leave.

“That is a very pleasant young man; but he seems to have strong political feelings, and the other way from ours,” said Lord Mordaunt, who perceived that he was discomposed. “My dear Ellen, you must be careful as to what you

say before him. I have a great objection to hear any woman talked of as eager about politics; though to be sure, in your situation it would be excusable."

How little do the keenest observers know of what is passing in their fellow-creatures minds!

CHAPTER IX.

He was a cold, good, honourable man,
Proud of his birth, and proud of every thing ;
A goodly spirit for a state divan,
A figure fit to walk before a king.

BYRON.

I sometimes almost think that eyes have ears';
Thus much is sure, that out of ear-shot things
Are, somehow, echoed to the pretty dears,
Of which I can't tell whence their knowledge springs.
'Tis wonderful how oft the sex have heard
Long dialogues, which passed without a word.

BYRON.

BEFORE she went to-bed that night, Ellen wrote a few lines to Frederick. It was more for the satisfaction of her own mind than his. He could not tell what was the real feeling which had so long made her shrink from obtaining her father's sanction to their attach-

ment. He could not know—he must never know—how painful were the tears she had shed, as she bitterly lamented the rashness of their early engagement. But if ever for a moment the thought had crossed her, that it was not yet too late—that one word to Frederick would restore her to liberty—that her engagement was known but to him and Edward, and that they would never betray her,—the next, she shrank with horror from such selfishness. Recollections of her early days came over her as a dream.

“ Those few and happy days, when all things smil’d
On her, a sinless and unthinking child ;
And friendly faces all round her shone,
And every voice breath’d friendship’s sweetest tone ;
Nor knew she *then* a kinder friend than *him*.”

Nor then, nor now ;—and he gave his happiness into her keeping—and she accepted the charge, and she would not, must not betray it. The path of her duty was straight before her.

In tears, and humility of spirit, she had prayed for strength to follow it; and even now she could hope, that in doing what she judged to be right, she should bring peace, not only to his home, but to her own heart.

There was one, of whom she must not think, who would suffer for her sake; but she was guiltless there. Never had she, by one unguarded look or word, given encouragement to Lord Raymond; and now, though as so many months must elapse before her marriage, she had agreed with her father that it should not be yet announced, she determined, at the earliest opportunity, to confide to him the secret of her engagement. She actually shivered at the thought of doing so; but she felt it would be right and honourable, and she should have strength for that—the kindest thing that could be done for him. And then in a few weeks she would leave London for Mordaunt Castle, and all would be well. They would not meet again

till she was the wife—she trusted, the happy wife, of Frederick Percival.

The next morning, when she entered the drawing-room, she was startled to find Frederick already there. He had been with Lord Mordaunt. In few but heart-felt words, he gave Ellen an account of their interview. His voice faltered as he spoke of the old man's kindness, when, without one reproach for the past, he received and blessed him as a son.

The long and unreserved conversation which followed, did much towards calming Ellen's mind. In the world, Frederick was reckoned proud and uncommunicative: but the world was wrong; as it may safely be pronounced in three-fourths of the judgments it forms: and the characters of those it does not understand, it invariably condemns. Frederick was only shy. He had seldom time to mix in general society. He was not *au courant* of the light topics of the day; and a feeling of inferiority

would come over him, among a set of people whose minds were never formed to cope with his; and he, whose eloquence night after night was the envy and admiration of hundreds, shrank from the lightest sneer of the veriest trifler in the room. But with Ellen, who had long known every feeling of his heart,—who had sense to understand, and sympathy to give to his pursuits,—all reserve vanished; and as he laid before her every fear and hope that had agitated him—associating her in all his plans for the future—consulting her as a friend—submitting to her slightest wish—she felt that, had she betrayed his confidence, had she proved false to one so trusting, she could never have known a happy hour more.

It was long after he left her, before she could bring down her thoughts to a level with the ordinary business, or, more properly speaking, amusements of the day. She was engaged to dine early with the Dalrymples, and to go with

them to the play. Charles Dalrymple, upon finding that it was what he called a fashionable piece, had waved his original objection to appearing at the minor theatres, and had even gone the length of taking a public box, next to one, which he had ascertained in the morning, was secured in Lady Hamilton's name: that settled the business—he felt sure that he could not be wrong. He had been two or three times to Grosvenor Square, to impress upon Ellen the expediency of her being punctual; for as he truly observed, if they were not there at the beginning, they could not know the beginning of the plot. Accordingly at half-past five Ellen arrived, and found Lord Raymond, Percival, and Edward already assembled; but there were evident signs of another being expected.

Mr. Dalrymple walked from the clock to the window, from the window to the bell, and then again to the clock; and he looked at Elizabeth

for leave to ring, and then restrained himself, and observed that it was customary to wait for a lady; and then he made another circuit, and said how disagreeable it was to be kept waiting; all sorts of strange people would get into their box, and they would lose all chance of finding out the plot; and then again he made a decided step towards the bell, and at that critical moment a carriage was heard to stop, and to Ellen's utter astonishment, Miss Rivers was announced.

“Get dinner directly!” Mr. Dalrymple called out, before she could enter the room; a delicate species of reproach, which all fidgetty gentlemen indulge in towards the delinquent who has kept them waiting five minutes beyond the hour named. Elizabeth rose, and in her most gracious manner advanced to meet and reassure Miss Rivers, who, however, even under the trying circumstance of being too late, retained all her usual self-possession.

Frederick was not less surprised than Ellen at seeing her there. He had long been slightly acquainted with the Howards, and had occasionally met Harriet in their society. The evening she made her appearance in Grosvenor Square, he said a few words to Elizabeth, expressive of his admiration for her beauty, and had only been answered by her indignant astonishment at Ellen's having invited people who, notwithstanding Edward's strange wish to bring them forward, she ought to have felt would be quite *deplacés* in such a party. The next time that they came it was worse still. Elizabeth had not patience to look at Edward's way of going on with Mrs. Howard; and as to Miss Rivers, no degree of beauty could excuse the airs she gave herself;—she was regularly impertinent. And now, here she was, sitting in Elizabeth's own arm-chair, undergoing a course of hopes and fears about heat and open win-

dows—petted—shawled—foot-stooled ! What could it all mean ?

The explanation was in truth simple enough. Elizabeth generally lived in a state of disgust with half the world, for its blindness in not appreciating her merits. She was clever, certainly, though owing to her exaggerated view of her own powers, she said more foolish things in one week, than a really foolish person would in a year. Her sarcastic, overbearing manner was not likely to make her popular. The world was equally blind about her looks. Because she was tall, and had a profusion of dark hair, she was convinced that she was handsome ; but she had never met with anything like general admiration. Indeed there were people who reckoned her actually plain ; and even the Dalrymples, in all the first enthusiasm in forming so high a connexion,—when they wrote their circulars to announce the marriage, were content, by general agreement,

to describe her as having a fine figure, with a decided air of fashion—which, the exulting Charles frequently observed, was the great thing after all.

It was in all sincerity that Elizabeth thought herself only too clever for the world in which she lived—which was almost exclusively composed of poor trifling idiots, unable to understand her.

That Ellen was beautiful, she could not deny; but taking her altogether, she was decidedly inferior to herself: still there she was, courted, caressed, admired wherever she appeared. Insensibly, she grew to look upon all Ellen's intimate friends and acquaintance as her personal enemies. Ellen was often amused at hearing Elizabeth declaim against the personal and mental defects of people, whom she scarcely knew by sight. "But are you acquainted with them, Elizabeth?" she in some very flagrant cases had ventured to say. "I! no indeed: *I*

would not know them for the world. It is not my way to have violent fits of engouement for every body who says a civil word to me."

Their reprobation was not however hopeless ; —a little neglect to Ellen—a little attention to herself,—and a change came over the spirit of her dream ;—they were pleasant after all ;—she meant to see a great deal of them ; and she did so, till they gave some fresh wound to her vanity ; and then her original opinion was right, and they were dismissed. She had no shame in her inconsistencies, and Ellen submitted to them with the best grace she could.

Mrs. Howard and Miss Rivers had at first been particularly obnoxious to Elizabeth. They were friends of Edward's, and must be prepossessed in Ellen's favour. Mrs. Howard made no exertion to be introduced to her. Before she had even heard the sound of her voice, Elizabeth pronounced her to be a foolish, tiresome little woman. She could not guess what

was meant by calling Harriet handsome. She had done her best—she had tried very hard—but she really could not see it. Soon she found reason entirely to change her opinion : she never changed it without reason. Miss Rivers, so far from being inclined to make up to Ellen, seemed rather to avoid her ; and Mrs. Howard was fairly worn out with saying pretty things, which made so little impression ;—she really admired Lady Ellen too much to abuse her ; but she felt baffled in her attempt to be intimate, and gave it up in despair.

It was at this crisis, that Elizabeth, the night before, had met them at Almack's. The room was crowded, and she looked round in vain for a seat. Charles was in agonies : his mother had strictly charged him to remember the delicacy of Lady Elizabeth's situation, and how adviseable it was that she should not be over-fatigued.

Mrs. Howard, seeing how matters were, in-

sisted upon giving up her seat to her. The heart must be hard indeed, which does not feel gratified for such a sacrifice, in such an extremity. Elizabeth's was quite softened; and five minutes after, Charles Dalrymple was trotting across the room, to tell Mrs. Howard that there was now a vacant seat next Elizabeth, which his sister was keeping for her. For the second time that evening, Mrs. Howard's appearance brought relief to Elizabeth. She was now able to despatch her husband, and sister-in-law, to walk about the room together. It was very deadening to the spirits, and irritating to the nerves, to have poor ugly Margaret sticking by her side the whole evening—her eyes fixed, and her mouth open, as if ready to catch any partners that would drop in; but they all passed by; her silent resignation was very provoking.

Mrs. Howard was flattered by such unlooked-for graciousness; and began to say acceptable things with all her might. She admired Eliza-

beth's gown—the way in which she had dressed her fine dark hair—consulted her as to the expediency of giving a ball—trusted that they might depend upon her presence and support—and envied her established position in society. Elizabeth had never met with a more fascinating little woman ; she no longer wondered that she was so generally liked ; and there was something touching in her anxiety for her niece's amusement, who certainly, when dancing and animated, was very handsome : she was tall, and Elizabeth owned that she admired tall people ;—she often wished that Ellen was a little taller. Upon the whole, she determined to make Mrs. Howard happy, and to *take up* Miss Rivers ; so now she was *her* friend and nothing was too good for her—not even the vacant place in the play-box, or her own arm-chair.

Edward had witnessed the rise and progress of this intimacy the preceding evening.

Though in general little apt to spare Elizabeth upon any of these sudden changes, he had his own reasons for being silent now. It was with unfeigned pleasure that he welcomed Harriet upon her entrance; and as he leaned over Elizabeth's chair, he seemed to be making himself equally agreeable both to her and her new friend.

In the meantime, Mr. Dalrymple could not be more anxious for the announcement of dinner than was Ellen. Lord Raymond had placed himself beside her, and seemed anxious, by the gentleness of his manner, to atone for the asperity he had shewn the night before. Frederick, as was his habit in general society, kept aloof: he was quietly seated at the other end of the room, turning over the pages of a review. Can that be the accepted lover of Ellen Glanville? thought Lord Raymond, as he saw him fairly settle into a paper upon the actual state of public affairs. Impossible! If he is in love

with anything, it can only be with the speaker and mace. And with renewed spirits, he gave himself up to the charm of the present moment.

Lord Raymond had never yet owned his love to Ellen. A secret consciousness told him that it would be repelled. But every hour passed in her society, betrayed the intensity of his feeling. No word she had ever spoken was forgotten. No smile, no sigh of hers passed unheeded. No thought half uttered, no feeling half betrayed, were ever lost to him; and even now, as his eye sought hers, she shrank from him, as she too surely felt that she was dearer to him than aught else this world contained.

“For life hath moments when a glance—
(If thought to sudden watchfulness be stirred)
A flush—a fading cheek,—perchance
A word,—less, less—the cadence of a word,
Lest in our gaze the mind’s deep veil beneath,—
Thence to bring haply knowledge, fraught with death.
Even thus, what never from his lips was heard,
Broke on her soul.”

Ellen’s colour varied—her calmness was for-

saking her. Suddenly rising, she walked across the room to Frederick. "Is that the paper, of which you were speaking to me?" she said.

He looked up surprised, "Did I? perhaps I might. I forgot that we had talked upon so grave a subject. But though you will not find the title attractive, there are some splendid passages;" and pointing out one, he placed the book in her hand.

We are strange creatures certainly.

The observation is not a very new one:—but there is nothing quite new under the sun; and the value of a remark entirely depends upon the *à propos* of its introduction. Words, which we have repeated ourselves, and have heard repeated for ever, strike us with all the force of novelty, as some occurrence, passing before our eyes, actually constrains us to exclaim, what thousands have exclaimed before, and will exclaim again.—Let us repeat then—we are strange creatures.

There sat Lord Raymond, his eyes sparkling

with pleasure, his heart beating with hope; and why? Because she, Ellen, ‘the lady of his love,’ when he was doing his utmost to make himself agreeable to her, had turned from him, left him, and walked across the room to speak to one whom, but the evening before, because she had mentioned him in terms of simple kindness, he had envied and disliked, as most men will envy and dislike a successful rival. He would have said that it was Ellen’s consciousness that worked the change; that she would not have betrayed so much, had he been quite indifferent to her. It may be suspected that he was only very bilious the evening before, and was particularly well now. It is never enough considered how much the goodness of our digestion has to do with our mental judgment.

And there sat Ellen, her cheek supported by a hand and arm scarcely less white than the satin dress she wore. Poor Ellen! there she sat, a perfect picture of quiet, youthful beauty, a book open before her, on which every thought

seemed to be intent, while her breath came short, and every pulse quivered with agitation, as she thought of the final blow this decided avoidance of his society must have given to Lord Raymond's hopes. She really dreaded the effect it might produce during the remainder of the day.

And there stood Frederick, whose being's end and aim was to make the happiness of Ellen; there he stood, between these two agitated beings, without a care for the present, without a doubt for the future, unconsciously acting the part of Calista, 'Spectatress of the mischiefs he had made.'

Once more be it said, certainly we are strange creatures.

"Do you think, my love, that these servants are aware that we expect no one else?" said the master of the house, after having two or three times opened a crack of the door, which led into the dining-room, and discovered nothing more exhilarating than a broad expanse of table-cloth.

Elizabeth only answered by a nod, and a look which said plainly, "don't be fussy."

Another minute and a half elapsed. "It wants but ten minutes to six," he said, in a chafed tone; but no sympathy followed; as usual, all the people in the room were thinking of what interested themselves most, and in none of their minds did dinner happen to be the first object.

This was more than Mr. Dalrymple could bear. He gave a violent pull to the bell; thereby irritating the cook, and hindering the butler, who was in the very act of bringing up the soup, which now, in pure spite, he left below, while he came, with an unconscious air, to ask what was wanted.

At last Mr. Dalrymple, looking round with a face into which he meant to throw an air of open hospitality, was able to congratulate his guests upon being fairly seated at dinner, and to beg them to eat as fast and talk as little as they could, or they should be late. The last injunction was utterly thrown away.

Miss Rivers, as if determined to puzzle Ellen, now threw off her reserve, and appeared the gayest of the gay. She laughed with Edward, appealed to Elizabeth, addressed Frederick with all the ease of an old acquaintance, and at last petrified Ellen, by charging *her* with reserve, and a determination not to make her acquaintance. This was too much ; Ellen had made all the advances in the first instance, and had been resolutely repelled. Without being very vain, she could not but think that her society was likely to prove a greater advantage to Miss Rivers, than Miss Rivers's to her. She could scarcely submit to this affectation of equality ; it chilled her more completely than ever. However, conversation went on brilliantly ; the niece performed to perfection the part that Edward had assigned to the aunt ; she helped off Elizabeth's dinner amazingly.

CHAPTER X.

How curious is the contemplation of the human mind in all its strange varieties; its loftiness and its meannesses; the shades and grades which separate the base from the noble, the fool from the sage.

ANON.

EVERY thing turned out as could be wished. The Dalrymples arrived full five minutes before the overture began. Lady Hamilton was already there; and, as Charles had calculated, they might very well be supposed to belong to her party. He was congratulating himself upon his own excellent management, when his

attention was attracted to the next box on the other side, by what is emphatically called a nudge, from a very well-pointed elbow, followed up by a cheerful exclamation of “ Well, this is luck ! here we all are, a set of friends got together. I always say that a public box is worth forty private ones ; it does give one a chance of seeing somebody. Captain Glanville,” continued Eliza Beaumont, “ you do not see who you have got for neighbours ;” and, to Mr. Dalrymple’s infinite horror, she stretched her arm across him, to shake hands with Edward. The corners of his mouth worked peevishly, when he turned round and discovered one unbroken expanse of Beaumonts. He agreed with Elizabeth in thinking them a forward presuming family—very difficult to keep at a distance ; but Miss Eliza Beaumont’s present behaviour surpassed any thing he had believed possible. It was exceedingly distressing that they should be settled next to him.

In the back row sat Mr. and Mrs. Beaumont, with Charles between them; in the next were Maria, Eliza, and Anne; and in the front, with heads curled like mops, and bright pink sashes, were ranged four chubby pets, the sweepings of the nursery, to whose existence, except upon harlequin farce-nights, Maria did not intend to give publicity for the next ten years. As it was, she quite agreed with Eliza, that it would be pleasanter to stay at home, than to go in that tiresome way, without the possibility of having any body with them worth speaking to.

She had once or twice suggested that it would be adviseable to take but two children at a time. But Mr. Beaumont upon this point was unpersuadable. When he went to the expense of a play-box, it was that his whole family might be amused. He thought it a respectable thing to see a large family-party at the play. When he was a child himself, his father

used to take all his children every year to Astley's and Covent Garden. It was a good ancient custom, which he should not drop—it was a part of the old regime; and he did not think the better of Richard for refusing to be of their party; it betrayed something of the foolish finery of a very young man.

As it was inevitable, Maria and Eliza submitted with becoming resignation to this waste of time. That anybody ever went to the play, for the mere purpose of seeing the play, had never entered their imaginations.

“Well done, Miss Eliza,” said Charles, in a schoolboy's whisper, which is seldom strictly confidential; “you're a quick hand at finding out friends, before friends find out you. Don't claw the poor fellow into our box; he seems well enough pleased where he is.”

“Not so loud, my dear boy, for mercy's sake. These little jokes are better kept for home.”

This maternal admonition so far quieted

Charles, that he contented himself for the next quarter of an hour by sticking out his tongue, shrugging up his shoulders, and imitating the restless motion of Eliza's head ; in which little innocent antics he was encouraged by Maria, who was thoroughly exasperated at having two sisters between her and the scene of interest.

A diversion was, however, at hand. An exclamation of Anne's, called her attention to a private box, on the other side of the house. It was occupied by John Harrison, in the character of chaperon, and his two sisters. Her eyes were scarcely directed towards it, when the door opened, and a young man entered. John instantly rose, and seemed to be pressing him to take *his* place in front—a thing John was not likely to do, unless there were good reasons for it.

Maria knew at once, as well as if she had been told, that the stranger must have taken the box himself, and invited the Harrisons to

join him ; and of course he had a right to the best place in his own box. He declined it, however, and seated himself behind Kate ; and after that, nothing but the back of Kate's head was to be seen ; while John and Julia leaned forward, as if they felt that they must be dependant upon one another for amusement. Maria could no longer doubt—this was confirmation, indeed, of Eliza's surmises—there, too surely, sate Kate and Kate's lover.

The alarm was instantly given to the rest of the family. Who—what could he be ? What on earth could possess him to fall in love with Kate ? He must fancy that she had money ?

Maria was quite sure that it would never end in a marriage. She was only vexed that John and Julia should be fancying that they were puzzled by what was going on. Anne thought him good-looking. The others could not conceive what he meant—they could not

abide his bushy hair—he decidedly looked vulgar and underbred.

“If we could catch anything half as good, bushy head and all, to fall in love with one of us,” said Charles, “we would not let him go again in a hurry.”

“Hush, my boy,” interrupted his mother, “you must not be rude to your sisters. I own I do feel a little vexed that my old friend, Mrs. Harrison, should have been so very close with me. I make it a rule never to appear curious; but I did ask her this morning, whether either of the girls had anything going on? and she answered, that as long as they were amused, she never troubled her head about anything else: which was very deceitful; for you may be sure that she has been cooking up this with all her might. And now, I recollect, I pressed her to take a play-box to-night, and she said that Mr. Harrison would not think it worth while; and good reason too,

when she lets her daughters go about with their brother, and their brother's friend. However, I shall be heartily glad if anything happen to please her. She may have more troubles than we know of. There was that boy, who went to sea. I suspect there was some awkward mystery about him. She looked very blank upon it, poor woman!" And Mrs. Beaumont, as a good christian should, sighed heavily over the woes of fat, prosperous Mrs. Harrison.

Certainly, if all the woes that Mrs. Beaumont fancied and prophesied for her, ever came to pass, Mrs. Harrison would not be fat and prosperous long. Sometimes she feared that Mr. Harrison's fortune was hurt by his speculations; or John, she was credibly informed, had taken to play at Crockford's; or Julia's high temper was a sad worry; or their radical connexions were doing the credit of the family no good. It was not to be wondered at

that Mrs. Harrison should feel. Still, as she observed, it was better to appear to know nothing of what was intended to be concealed—and she was not curious,—so she only asked every disagreeable question she could think of, every time they met.

The curtain was now drawn up, and Mrs. Yates discovered in the character of Victorine.

“ We must all be silent now, and try to find out the plot,” Mr. Dalrymple said peremptorily to Eliza, after having directed three or four very sour looks into the interior of the box,—which, in the first fervour of the Harrison turmoil, had been utterly thrown away.

“ Oh, to be sure,” said Eliza. “ Captain Glanville, would you, just for one moment, lend me your bill ?”

Edward, who was delighted at his brother-in-law’s discomfiture, immediately handed it to her ; at the same time begging that any remark

she might have to make, she would forward through her next neighbour.

The inhabitants of London are not a play-going population. Many are too busy—more are too idle—some cannot bear to eat their dinners early—others detest being kept from their beds so late—the grave will not countenance any thing pronounced so wicked—the gay will not sacrifice their hours to any thing that lasts so long—the rich can afford more costly amusements—the poor cannot afford to amuse themselves at all—and each and all want something new.

Moreover, in the present age, the comedies of real life are so broad, the tragedies so deep, crimes are so startling, and immorality so little disguised, that we read and hear daily of ridicules, of griefs, of guilt, which surpass all that can be brought before us on the stage. So the idle and the trifling go about panting for something that will give them fresh sensations. Heaven help

them!—they would be grateful to be made to feel pain, rather than to go on not feeling any thing.

Victorine really was original, and for three whole hours of mortal life it raised emotions, enough to satisfy the most fastidious. Never was there a brighter picture than the first scene displayed, of innocent love and humble happiness. But Victorine was beautiful and fair, and the temptations which cross the path of such were crowding thick upon her. Conscious of the integrity of her feelings, in the pride and gaiety of her heart, she awakens the jealousy of her lover, and allows him to part from her in sorrow and in anger. Alone, she is startled at the ambitious thoughts which are gaining possession of her mind. She grieves for the pain she has wantonly inflicted, and before she retires to her homely bed, kneels and prays that the daughter may be blessed and strengthened, for the sake of that virtuous mother,

whose pride she had been in life, and comforter in death.

The scene is changed, and, surrounded by every luxury that wealth can give, Victorine is discovered in her splendid, guilty home. Then follows her meeting with him, who, loving and beloved, was yet forsaken—his sad, yet proud disdain—his malignant rejection of her proffered benefits. He leaves her, and in the first frantic moments of grief and remorse, she tears, destroys, and tramples on, the gorgeous rewards of her infamy. Then comes the soothing flatteries of her false friends—the forced and heartless gaiety of her coarse unprincipled associates. She overvalues the extent of her power, and by the reckless insolence of her words, fatally offends her titled lover, who casts her out, forlorn and friendless, upon the world.

The first act was over, and there was time to think, and time to talk.

“ Mr. Dalrymple,” said Eliza, “ just touch Captain Glanville’s elbow for me. Captain Glanville,” she continued, as, with a look of utter disgust, Charles gently complied,—“ I say, how did you like that scene?—Well, how odd—he does not hear. That disagreeable Miss Rivers seems to have a talking fit to-night. How does she happen to be here with you ?”

“ Lady Elizabeth is in the habit of forming her own parties,” Charles answered very formally ; “ and Miss Rivers is generally allowed to be very beautiful, and an ornament to any society. She gave us the pleasure of her company at dinner ; and if, instead of looking on the stage, she has for the last ten minutes preferred to carry on conversation in a subdued tone, with those who seem ready to converse with her, she has shewn great propriety of judgment. The last was not a scene for young ladies to comment upon—it had better have been omitted altogether.”

“Well,” answered Eliza, after having informed Anne, in a whisper, that Mr. Dalrymple was a regular ninny, and would not give her a moment’s peace,—“I did not see what was the harm of it; I thought it very amusing. Though Miss Rivers may be all you say, I suspect that Captain Glanville is not particularly well pleased with all she is saying. She seems to be one of those people, who think to make themselves pleasant by saying unpleasant things. He turned red, and all manner of colours, just now.”

Edward certainly was looking annoyed; and Miss Rivers was looking, as those will look who have ventured upon a topic which they immediately feel they had better have left alone.

“Am I asking an impertinent question?” she had said; “or is what I heard last night true, and your sister going to be married to Lord Raymond?”

Edward’s answer was an abrupt and decided

denial; but he glanced uneasily towards Ellen. Lord Raymond was speaking to her with that earnest expression of look and tone, which are so natural to those who love, and so useful to those who would be thought to do so.

Ellen's answer seemed to be a playful contradiction, as, turning round, she called upon Frederick to take her part; and then she undertook to enlighten him about different points in the play, which had puzzled him almost as much as Charles Dalrymple: for like all deeply-reasoning men, he was very often puzzled by trifles. He was so much in the habit of searching for reason and consistency, that he insisted upon having them, where neither was to be found.

All men, more or less, have this propensity; and it is partly owing to it that women are found to be their best advisers, where immediate decision is necessary. By contenting themselves with going little beyond the surface,

they seize at once all views of a question ; and in the ordinary affairs of life, nine times out of ten, their judgment will be right ; while a man, by examining into every possible result of good and evil, makes up his mind, to his complete satisfaction, as to what is the best step to take, at the very time when the opportunity for taking any is gone by.

In the meantime, Maria was keeping a very sharp look out upon the proceedings in the Harrison box. There was a moment of relief, when the man with the bushy head was seen to get up, open the door, and disappear. Perhaps he saw somebody opposite, whose society he preferred. But no ! he returned almost immediately, with a second play-bill for Kate's own use. He certainly treated her with marked distinction.

Julia Harrison was delighted to see so many pair of Beaumont eyes constantly turned that way. Next to having a lover of her own, sitting behind her chair, she could fancy no greater

luck than seeing them there. "You know, John," she said; "that if it had not been for me, we should not have been here at all. Kate never would have got courage to ask Mr. Butler to take a box for us. Now, I should not the least wonder if he were to propose to night. I reckon that I shall have made this marriage entirely."

If she were only allowed to play a principal part, either as confidante or promoter, Julia could support with rare good humour the prosperity of even her best friends, and nearest relatives. When it came upon her in the shape of a surprise, she did not positively resent it, but she very much doubted whether it was genuine. Her consent to their feeling happy was easily purchased. She was far from being unconscionable in her demands. It required but little to enable her to persuade herself, and to try to persuade others, that she was the aider and abettor of all the events that were

passing round her ; and she was very tenacious of having her privilege invaded. If a whole society were eagerly discussing the reigning interest of the day, Julia felt like a bookseller whose copyright had been pirated : she had been the first person who had mentioned the subject : she could not look upon it as general property. No true friendship was ever formed, unless she had introduced the parties to each other. No dispute was talked of, in which she had not done her best to reconcile the enemies. Her right of property extended to most public events. The Battle of Waterloo, to be sure, was fought before her time ; but she shared in the general joy. When it appeared that Captain Ross and his crew were not frozen up in ribs of ice, or swallowed like oysters by Polar bears, she had an additional fact to mention, which she knew must interest her hearers,—she had first seen the paragraph in the papers. But all her former feats were nothing compared

to her having persuaded Kate to put on her pink gauze, the very evening that they made acquaintance with Mr. Butler. He asked the lady of the house to introduce him; and by Kate's own confession, his first words were admiration of her dress—*that* first caught his eyes. His attentions were soon so decided, that Mrs. Harrison set about an inquiry as to his family and circumstances. Both were satisfactory;—his father a rich merchant; he, an only son, and a junior partner in the house. Mrs. Harrison saw them all set off to the play with great satisfaction.

Again, the curtain drew up, and the scene was changed indeed. Years have passed away; and Victorine, no longer beautiful, but graceful even in poverty and degradation, appears as the half-starved mistress of an empty lodging-house. Again fortune seems faintly to smile upon her; her rooms are taken by one whom she had known in better days; but he is

robbed and roughly treated by one of her former associates, and his ruffian companion, who had forcibly entered her house, to conceal themselves from the pursuits of justice. Some of the stolen property is found upon her. In vain she asserts her innocence. She throws herself at the feet of the officer who is to convey her to prison: he is the forsaken lover of her youth. Maddened with grief and shame, she rushes from him,—the river is at hand,—one shriek is heard, as she bursts from the hold of him who would detain her, and the waters close above her.

“I am afraid that Lucy will be frightened, and set up a roar,” Mrs. Beaumont whispered to her husband, at this moment, when every body was wrapped in agonised attention; “and I cannot get the girls to attend to me. Mr. Dalrymple, will you be good-natured enough to lean forward, and tell my little girl that it is only make-believe water,—nothing but an

old carpet,—so the poor lady is not really drowned.”

Mr. Dalrymple did as he was told, and even patted the little innocent on the head ; in fact, he was himself very grateful to Mrs. Beaumont for the intelligence.

Again the scene was changed to the humble garret where Victorine earned her bread in poverty and peace. All is as we saw it first. The unfinished work,—the wooden chairs,—the unadorned dressing table,—the humble bed. Who is it lying there, disturbed and restless in her sleep ? who, starting, calls for mercy—springs forward and sinks upon the ground ? Nothing but sobs and convulsive gasps are heard. Soon the sufferer raises her head—looks wildly round—her countenance changes from terror—despair—to doubt—to ecstasy. The light ringing laugh of happiness is heard. She runs to the glass ; it is herself she sees—still young—still beautiful. She touches the

inanimate things around her—all real—all substantial. She clasps her tiny hands, and laughs, and doubts, and laughs again. She is gay and restless as a child. The voice of her lover is heard at the door—his jealousy has flown—this is their wedding-day. A joyful cry bursts from her,—“Oh, goodness me! how happy I am!” Again her sweet wild laughter sounds through the house. Victorine has been punished for her ambitious thoughts: she has been the victim of—a *dream*!

“Well, to be sure, this is very extraordinary,” said Mr. Dalrymple; “a very odd, puzzling kind of plot; but I think I made it out. Elizabeth, my love, I will explain it to you.”

“I thank you; but I understand it perfectly.”

Charles was too much elated with his own ingenuity, to be so easily put off: “Ellen, do you understand the trick upon which the piece turns?”

Ellen did not hear him; her face was buried in her hands; that cry of happiness was still ringing in her ears, and she could scarcely repress the words that were ready to burst from her lips, "Oh! that I were dreaming too! that I could wake, and find that I am free!"

Lord Raymond seemed to guess her very thoughts. "Can you envy her?" he gently said. "Lady Ellen, can you even guess that there are moments of discouragement and unhappiness, when the reality seems dark indeed, —when it would be bliss—actual bliss—if we could throw from us as dreams the sad forebodings of our waking thoughts?"

"I can," Ellen answered; "who, that lives, cannot? Perhaps those whose lot is cast among the happy and the prosperous are most subject to such fruitless longings. The poor and the afflicted are actively engaged, striving with their poverty and their woes. One small speck appears in the bright scene

before us ; and we gaze, till we fancy it a dark cloud that is to overshadow our future existence, and shrink from the prospect we have created for ourselves." Ellen spoke before the excitation of her feelings had subsided ; and when she found that Frederick was intently listening to her, she trembled at the interpretation he might give to her words.

" But with you, Ellen," he said, " such feelings cannot last. The weak and the misjudging only can be long overpowered by shadows of their own creation."

" I think, Ellen," remarked Mr. Dalrymple, who had only caught some words of what was passing, " that you are rather apt to be frightened at a dark cloud. When I joined you and Edward out riding yesterday, you insisted upon returning home immediately, because you said it was going to be a storm. I rode a full hour after you went, and scarcely remember a finer afternoon."

Lord Raymond and Percival laughed so heartily at the guileless simplicity of this speech, that Mr. Dalrymple was persuaded he had said a good thing without knowing it, and, to Ellen's great relief, took the conversation entirely under his own management. She was never more convinced of the truth of the assertion, that every thing living has its use—even a talking fool.

Elizabeth now confessed that she was tired, and ready to go home. She had felt rather neglected for the last ten minutes. Her new friend was so very much absorbed talking to Edward, that she began to doubt whether she should eventually prefer her to every body else.

Ellen had no doubt as to her own feelings on the subject: she recoiled from her more than ever. It was not her fault that she overheard the few words Miss Rivers addressed to Edward, as he was assisting her to put on her cloak.

“You go, then, in two days. Remember, Mr. Glanville, that I expect your eternal gratitude for my good offices.”

Edward's answer did not reach her; she could only guess at it from Harriet's rejoinder. “Impossible! there could be no suspicion.”

Altogether, Ellen had a great deal to think of that night; and she was glad to find herself in the solitude of her own room.

The Beaumonts staid till the end of all things. Eliza's enjoyment suddenly grew very great. Edward, after taking Miss Rivers to the carriage, came back to see the beginning of the farce, and allowed Eliza to talk to him incessantly, during the ten minutes he remained.

To Maria the evening had been particularly unpleasant; and the close of it surpassed all the rest. As she followed her father and mother through the crowd, with little Andrew tugging at one hand, and Susy at the other, they fell in with the Harrison party. Kate

passed them in all her glory, with only a shy, conscious sign of recognition; but John and Julia were overflowing with cordiality. John even offered his vacant arm to Anne; who looked like a culprit as she accepted it, after having suggested the expediency of his offering it to Maria; to which he wittily answered, that she played to such perfection the part of Medea rushing off the stage with her two children, he could not break in upon such a picture.

“We have been quite amused at your domestic party,” Julia said to Eliza; “it was almost as good as the play to us. I wish that I had time to tell you all the good things that Mr. Butler said about it.”

“Oh! do tell us; who is Mr. Butler?” said Eliza.

“Is not he the man,” asked Maria, “who was refused by Miss Percy one week, and by Sophy Harding the next? and who went about

all last year trying to find somebody to marry him?"

"No," answered Julia; "you are confusing him with Mr. Bulkley, who, you know, you used to ask to your house three times a-week, to come and sing with you. I had settled that he must be in love with one of you; and it was quite a blow to me when I heard of his attachment to Sophy Harding.—But, good night,—you see I am waited for;" and with a very significant look towards Kate, she walked off; and the Beaumonts were soon comfortably packed up in the family coach.

CHAPTER XI.

The brothers met ——

Unlike had been their life, unlike the fruits
Of different tempers, studies, and pursuits.

CRABBE.

She had dreamed
Of Love, as his first likeness seemed ;
But tidings of young Raymond's fate,
Wakened her from her dream too late.

L. E. L.

EDWARD had promised Ellen that his last day in London should be devoted to her. There was much that he wished to say to her before his departure ; and he was anxious to find her alone ; but though he was with her early the next morning, and though Ellen was as anxious as he could be to pass their last few hours

quietly and comfortably together, two were already gone, which, to both of them, had appeared like four. One interruption had succeeded another, till, upon the entrance of Lady Raymond, with a long list in her hand of the articles of Mary's trousseau, which Ellen was to hear discussed in detail, Edward, in despair, seized his hat, and made his escape, promising to return to dinner; and poor Ellen resigned herself to her fate, wondering whether it ever entered the heads of her many connections, as they talked to her by the hour of all their various interests, that there might be times when both her head and her heart felt full, almost to bursting, of her own.

Edward walked slowly away, with no very defined idea as to where he was proceeding. He had been to the Howards, even before he had seen Ellen, and he had promised to return there in the evening. It would be preposterous to go there now. He knew that he must even-

tually pay a farewell visit to the Dalrymples. If he had a decided object, that was it; but, in the mean time, he sauntered on in exactly the contrary direction.

Eliza Beaumont was in the habit of saying that she delighted in talking to Captain Glanville, because he was so handsome. There were others in the world, of more consequence than Eliza, who were, perhaps, of the same opinion, though they did not express it. However that may have been, he was certainly very gentleman-like; he was even very distinguished looking; a phrase, by the bye, which might perhaps be better expressed in French, but that the English one is quite expressive enough. At this moment there was an expression upon his countenance, which was seldom seen there, —that of deep and settled thought. No common observer could have said whether the subject of his rumination was pleasing or painful to him; but it was quite evident that

London, in June, overflowing with carriages, and dray-carts, and dust, and busy human life, might, for any thing he knew to the contrary, have been a green field by the side of a lake. He was busy with the world within. He did indeed, mechanically, three or four times, raise his hand to his hat; from whence it might be supposed, he had caught some passive bow, or smile, directed to him; but his mere bodily perceptions were certainly not enough under his own command to enable him to say by whom.

At the entrance of St. James' Street he fell in with Lindsay, in his way to some of the tradespeople employed in preparations for his marriage. He asked Edward to accompany him; and the two brothers continued their walk together. Lord Lindsay was unusually communicative; and they discussed the merits of his horses, his plate, and even the setting of the future Lady Lindsay's jewels. Upon all these points he seemed to think Edward's opinion

worth having. Edward's spirits rose ; considering what a formidable person Lindsay was, and how little they were in the habit of being together, he really felt very much at his ease, and was rather proud that he should be considered worth consulting about any thing. He had a persuasion that he appeared to very little advantage in his brother's society ; he was haunted by a depressing conviction that Lindsay thought much more ill of him than he deserved.

The horses were seen and duly admired ; a suggestion of Edward's, about the form of a branch candlestick, was adopted. Nothing now remained to inspect, but the re-setting of the family diamonds ; and, as that was of little immediate importance to himself, Lindsay determined to wait till Mary was able to go and judge for herself, and allowed the conversation to turn on general subjects. Edward was actually engaged in a very animated account of the private history of an Italian singer, who

was then making a great sensation, when they came within sight of Lady Raymond's house.

"You dine there to-day, of course," said Edward, interrupting himself; "and as I leave London early to-morrow, we must part here."

"You really go, then? Under all the circumstances it is certainly the wisest thing you can do; but I own, that when Ellen told me that such was your intention, I was incredulous."

"And why should you have doubted it? Why, if you had the slightest curiosity on the subject, could you not have applied to me to know? I confess, Lindsay," said Edward, reddening, "that I do not understand you."

"It is not my way to interfere unnecessarily in the arrangements of any one," Lord Lindsay answered coldly; "but you must be aware, that your intimacy with the Howard family has given rise to various reports—whether true or false I have certainly neither the right nor the

wish to ask. But, as I believe that Miss Rivers is entirely without fortune, for fear of any misapprehension, I think it best to mention, that my father has not the power at present, even if he had the inclination, to increase your allowance. You must remember, that a heavy sum was expended not three years ago, to clear off your debts, and my marriage has entailed many necessary expenses, which it may be inconvenient to meet. My father's income is considerably less than the world gives it out ; in fact, he is very far from rich."

Edward thought of the horses and the plate he had just seen. They certainly did not betray the poverty of which his brother spoke ; and he could not suspect *him* of imprudence. His own he had never attempted to defend ; but he felt that Lindsay's recurrence to it now was harsh and uncalled-for.

As if to escape any reply, Lord Lindsay held out his hand, and took leave of Edward ; which

operation he performed with exactly as much warmth, as if they were to meet again the next hour.

There is always something characteristic in the manner of shaking hands. A stiff cold person is stiff and cold to his fingers' ends. The last five minutes had totally overthrown Edward's equanimity. He had smiled almost scornfully when Lindsay alluded to his marriage with Harriet Rivers; and now he strode on rapidly, as it became a man to do who felt at war with himself and all his fellow-creatures. There are moments of inward strife, when one unkind word from one single individual will overwhelm us, as if the universal condemnation of the universe were concentrated on our devoted heads.

His visit to the Dalrymples, however, was conscientiously paid. He was quite in the humour for self-inflicted mortification. He even submitted to Charles Dalrymple's suggestion,

of leaving a card at old Mrs. Dalrymple's door.

Ellen could not but be struck by Edward's gravity when they met at dinner. He exerted himself to talk of what was likely to interest his father; but he started abruptly from one subject to another, and shewed too clearly that his mind was ill at ease.

Lord Mordaunt generally retired for an hour's rest after dinner, and Ellen determined, as soon as they should be left together, to do her utmost to break through Edward's fit of reserve. But for the first five minutes her courage failed her; and Edward, with his arm resting on the chimney-piece, and his eyes fixed on the carpet, seemed to be sunk into his deepest state of abstraction.

Ellen could not suffer this to go on.

"And is this the way that our last evening is to be spent?" she said. "Edward, I cannot put up with this silence. I insist upon your

saying something to me, and upon your listening to three words out of ten, when I speak to you. Come and sit down here by me, instead of standing there in one attitude, looking at the carpet."

Edward obeyed; but Ellen's prospects did not improve. He took her hand between both of his, and leaning forward, rested his forehead upon them, and hid his face from her sight.

"Are you well, dear Edward?" Ellen asked timidly.

"Yes;" and that seemed to be the full extent of the answer she was to have.

Certainly, where a man chooses to be impenetrable, there is nothing in nature so hard to subdue. You may make way into a rock with gunpowder—you may get at the bottom of the sea in a diving-bell—but no invention has yet been found to get at a man's thoughts, if he chooses to keep them to himself. Thumb-screws and iron boots have been tried, and

failed. If any thing could succeed, it would be the soft persuasive tones of a woman's voice—of such a voice as Ellen's. She was not baffled yet. Though he seemed determined to make no call upon her for sympathy in his concerns, it was but natural to expect that he should shew some for her. So, though but little apt to talk of herself at any time, and particularly disinclined to do so now, she began at once upon the subject which he might reasonably suppose to be nearest her heart.

“ We have hardly met, Edward, since papa gave his consent to my marriage with Frederick, and you are the only person who can wish me joy; for we have settled it is to remain a secret for the present.”

“ I do wish you joy, dearest — from my very soul. Ellen, love—I trust *you* will be happy;” and Edward drew her towards him, and pressed her to his heart. “ I suppose,”

he added, after a moment's pause, "that it *would* be unpleasant to let your engagement be known, so many months before your marriage; and yet I do not quite approve of this secrecy. If I were going to stay on here, to give you the benefit of my prudent care,—you may smile, Ellen, but I can be prudent for you,—I would not repeat now what may worry you; but it is better you should be aware that your marriage to Raymond is very generally reported; and when I saw his manner to you yesterday evening, I can hardly wonder that it should be so. Oh! Ellen, do not start and look so pale. You are not to blame for this—you, who have no thought but for Percival. But tell me, has it never struck you that Raymond loves you better than is consistent with his future peace?"

"It has," Ellen answered. "To you, I will not attempt to deny it; but it frightens me to hear that my name has been joined with his.

I have strove so hard—I have done my very utmost to shew, that for his love I can make no return. Edward, you do not suspect that for a moment I could have been heartless enough to give him encouragement. You, who know that I am no longer free, cannot think so ill of me. I could not bear that.”

Edward was surprised at the emotion she shewed, and assured her again and again that he had not meant to cast the shadow of blame upon her.

“It was but for Raymond’s sake I spoke. You are now necessarily much thrown together, and your ways are so kind and gentle, Ellen, that till he knows positively that you are engaged to another, he will not cease to hope. It is for him only that I fear. Even were you the heartless coquette none could ever think you, Percival is too generous and confiding to have the slightest mistrust. But if, for a moment, he could suppose that another were preferred

to him, he would resign you, though his heart were to break in the effort."

"Frederick's happiness is dearer to me than my own. I should be a wretch indeed, if I failed in securing that. Edward, I would give worlds, that Lord Raymond and I had never met, or that we were never to meet again; and we shall part soon, and all will then be well. But, in the meantime, what would you have me do? I cannot be colder than I have been already. I cannot be unkind."

"I know that you cannot," said Edward, smiling; "and even if you could, he might be perverse enough to love you still. I wish that he knew positively of your engagement."

"Then tell him of it for me," Ellen answered eagerly.

"You forget, I go to-morrow; and it will be better that you should do it yourself. He deserves that you should treat him as a friend; and though it is all right and fair that Perci-

val's merits should blind you to those of every body else, I can assure you, that as the world goes, there are not many Raymonds to be found in it. No, no, tell him yourself, and throw in a few soothing words, upon the recollection of which he may live, till he falls in love with another; which we may hope in the course of time he will do—the sooner the better for your comfort, Ellen.”

Ellen tried to look as if this suggestion made her very comfortable, and now thought it quite time to carry the war into the enemy's country.

“Edward,” she said, “you have talked to me a great deal about myself, and I have heard all you had to say, and have answered all your questions; and I will do all you wish; and now listen to me. There was a time, when if you were troubled, you used to come to me for comfort, or at least for sympathy; and I think that I have never failed you. Yet you are unhappy now, and I do not know what disturbs

you. Dear, dear Edward, trust me once more, and let us be what we have been to each other."

"You are what you have ever been to me, Ellen. I have no friend so loved as you. There is no secret that concerns myself alone, which I would keep from you. But this!—it would be worse than useless. The time may come, when I shall call upon you for more than sympathy—for active kindness and support to one who is dearer to me than life. In the meantime be satisfied that I am not unhappy. I am only—what, to be sure, is almost worse—undecided."

"And cannot I help to decide you?—who is she that is dearer to you than life?—No, you shall not tell me, if you do not wish it. I will guess, and talk on as if you had done so. My poor Edward, I see it all now; and I fear it would be most imprudent. You have no money, and ——— "

“Money ! ah, there it is. Money, or rather the want of money, has been my bane through life. Do not be shocked, Ellen ; but I am quite convinced that money is the hinge upon which all our happiness turns. It is something tangible—there can be no delusion in that. With your hands and your pockets full of those little white and yellow things called money, you can purchase happiness, as surely as any other commodity. You may shake your head ; but I am only saying candidly, what every body feels, more or less. Ask the beggar in the streets—the debtor in his prison—the old and the weak who dig for their daily bread, till their graves are dug for them,—ask them, what on this earth they most covet,—and they will tell you—money. For want of it, all the affections of life, if they still retain any, are sources of added bitterness. And the rich—their dearest ties are broken—their nearest relations die, and the luxuries of life close over

their losses, and they are comforted ; but reduce them to poverty, and every hour they will miss some lost comfort, and they will pine away their lives, sighing for their lost money."

"I do not agree with you," Ellen began ; but it was not her turn yet.

"No, I dare say not," interrupted Edward. "You have never known what it is to be balked in every turning of life for want of money. I have kept to the last, the most harrowing case of all—that of younger brothers. They must not look for amusement out of doors, because they cannot afford to pay for it ; nor think of leading domestic lives—for how are they to feed their wives and children ? and if for a few months they forget their miserable conditions, and allow themselves a few scanty necessities, they get into difficulties, from which they only escape at the expense of being schooled, reproached, and distressed for the rest of their lives."

Edward felt better after having spoken the last sentence ; it bore very hard upon Lord Lindsay ; and we all know, that when somebody has said an annoying thing to us, which, for some reason, at the moment, we have put up with in silence, there is great relief in talking at the offending individual, and his provoking theories, for the rest of the day.

“Poor fellows ! theirs is a heart-rending case indeed, particularly when, as sometimes happens,” said Ellen, smiling, “their views of the necessities of life are rather extended. Perhaps, as you say, I am not a fair judge, having never felt either the privations, or the temptations, that the want of money can bring. Yes ; once I did,—when I longed to help you, and could not. But of one thing I am certain ;—there are struggles, and severe ones too, which the more or the less of money has nothing to do with.”

“I wish I could have one of them then,

for the novelty of the thing," replied Edward.

"But after all," Ellen asked, "is it quite impossible that you should make up enough to live upon, now that you are grown so prudent? Is Harriet Rivers quite without fortune?"

"Harriet Rivers! again Harriet Rivers! and you, Ellen, too, are fancying that! I tell you, that if Harriet Rivers had as many thousand pounds as I have miserable shillings, she is the very last woman I could marry. But ask me no more; already I have said too much."

Ellen's wish to hear more no longer existed. A sickening conviction came over her, that she, for whom Edward bespoke her support and kindness, was one with whom, but for his sake, she could hold no communion—one who, when she should wake from the madness of that infatuation which was leading her to break through the sacred ties of home, to brave guilt in the sight of heaven, and infamy on earth, would be

beyond all the comfort she could offer : between them there could be no feeling in common.

Edward seemed to be unconscious of the train of thought he had awakened ; and after a short silence, he added : “ Dear Ellen, I must once more repeat, that if this mystery were only mine, it should no longer be a mystery to you ; or if advice could help me, to you only would I apply for it. But no advice can be of service here—none can judge for me, in what is simply a case of feeling.”

“ And of principle ? ” asked Ellen. But Lord Mordaunt’s entrance precluded the possibility of an answer, and she was left more perplexed and dissatisfied than ever. There was only one source of satisfaction left ; but that was some comfort to her : Edward would be gone the next day—there could be no catastrophe yet.

He remained now but a short time longer. He spoke to his father of his hopes of being

able to pay a short visit to Mordaunt Castle, in the course of the shooting season; promised Ellen that he would write often; embraced her affectionately; and departed to fulfil his engagement to the Howards.

CHAPTER XII.

When he would smile,
'Tis like the gleaming of December's sun ;
And when he frowns—St. Anne ! I tremble for you.

KENNEDY.

'Tis done—the last bright gem is set
On Eva's sparkling coronet ;
A soil on her rich veil appears—
Unsuited here—and it is tears,

L. E. L.

It was Lord Lindsay's wedding day. As Charles Dalrymple had portended, all the connexions of both families were invited, and carriages were rolling rapidly in the direction of St. George's church ; and Mary stood before the glass, arrayed in all her bridal splendour. Ellen had placed the wreaths of orange flowers upon her head, and was arranging, in graceful

folds, the long rich veil which was to hide the tears, and blushes, and tremors of the bride. And Mary stood like a statue, and submitted to be decorated, as a necessary part of the proceedings of the day ; but there were as strong emotions gathering within, as it was in the power of her soft and loving nature to feel.

Her mother stood before her, and gazed upon her with all a mother's pride ; but not with pride alone. Recollections of former years came over her. She remembered, as if it were but yesterday, the dawning of *her* bridal morning, when *her* heart beat high with tenderness and fear, and she too was surrounded by admiring friends, and was beloved, and young, and beautiful. But her marriage had not been happy ; and though she had grieved, in agony of heart, over the untimely death of the father of her children, he had lived long enough to teach her how bitter can be the feelings of a neglected, yet still loving wife. And now her heart sank within her, as

she looked upon her gentle child, and thought that such a trial might be reserved for her. Lord Lindsay's manner was cold and stern. Oh! would he make her happy? How should she bear to part with her darling Mary, the comfort of her years of widowhood?

But why recount the fears and misgivings which all mothers, even worldly and ambitious mothers, must feel, when the hour is come that those awful, binding vows are spoken, from which, even if they entail regret and misery, there is no fitting absolution but death.

Mary's eyes were fixed upon her mother's, and as she watched her saddened countenance, she clasped her hand in hers, and pressed it closely to her beating heart; thereby not a little endangering the effect of the last touches which Mrs. Robson, Ellen's able coadjutrix in the task of decoration, was assiduously employed in giving to her appearance. In fact, she felt that this was the most important day of

her life, as well as of Miss Spencer's; for if, owing to any failure on her part, her young mistress did not look her best on the day of her marriage, there would be no use in her looking any how, ever after.

For some time Mrs. Robson bore these little ebullitions of filial tenderness with exemplary patience; but after having twice submitted in silence to the sudden bursting away of a pin, which she was in the act of applying to secure some scientific arrangement, she could stand it no longer; and after casting a withering look at the agitated mother's offending hand and arm, she broke forth—

“Miss Spenser,—ma'am,—would you be kind enough to keep still; and if my lady would be good enough to stand a little farther off, I should be better able to judge of the effect. Stop—I'll get your ladyship a chair,—but we must keep in mind there's no time to be lost. I was quite in consternation just now, thinking that I heard my lord's foot on the stairs,

coming to hurry you off, ma'am. But, to be sure, he's in no hurry to be giving you away—for he's universally allowed to be the best and fondest of brothers;—quite a pattern; and, I dare say," continued the zealous attendant, who was beginning to grow sentimental herself, "that he will be fit to hang himself for want of you, all the rest of this blessed day. Oh! what a jerk was there;—why could not you have asked me, Miss Spencer, to reach your pocket handkerchief? There's that fall of blonde all to wrongs again. I should like to know what were Madam Carson's ideas, when she put it on in that fashion. She must have thought, sure enough, that the gown was meant for some old fat dowager duchess. For my part, I never could see why ladies prefer the make of those French women.—A stitch there, you think, Lady Ellen? Well, there does seem sense and reason in that; and if it is not making too free, I should like to compliment your ladyship on your own appearance. That white

embroidered silk is a sweet rich thing indeed—quite fit for a bride—which your ladyship soon will be, I make no doubt. But, save us all! I keep running on; and, sure as fate, there are Newman's greys, and the yellow jackets, coming up the street, and we not got off to church yet; and, I dare to say, my new lord's waiting at the door as impatient as he can be. If you'll believe me, Lady Ellen, I never got a good look at him till yesterday, and a fine stately looking gentleman he is. There'll be a great crowd, no doubt; and it is not often they'll see such a couple.—Indeed, indeed, my lady, you must stand still. Now, isn't that funny enough, that I should be calling her my lady before she is married? But it comes of my doing it down stairs two or three times yesterday, just to show Mr. Johnson how natural it would sound. You'll be very careful of that clasp, if you please, Lady Ellen; it would be a bad omen indeed, and his lordship

might take it as a slight, if the bracelet with his hair was to drop off. Now, I think we're finished. Will you take a good look, my lady, and tell us if every thing is right?"

"Ah! poor thing!" whispered the old waiting woman to Ellen, "she's thinking how lonely she will be when we are gone—and very natural."

The next moment Mary was at her mother's feet, and she clasped her arms about her neck, and kissed away the tears that were rolling down her cheeks; and she found voice to speak of her happiness—her love—her confidence in Lindsay; for, instinctively, she felt that such assurances were the best comfort that she could offer.

During this scene, Robson's agony was very great. Except that it would have been a sin and a shame to be angry with any body on their wedding-day, she could really have been angry with Mary. "As sure as I stand here,"

she almost screamed, "the wreath and the veil will get pushed out of their places. I cannot think, not I, what has come over my lady. One would think that she was going to Miss Spencer's funeral. Lady Ellen! you who have influence, will you interfere? Why there's she, in almost as great an agitation as the others. Oh, my lord! I beg your pardon, I did not see that you were standing behind my back; you're a special deliverance indeed. I am sure that your lordship will never approve of this way of going on; Miss Spencer's eyes will be as red as a ferret's."

Lord Raymond was, as Robson had pronounced him to be, the best and fondest of brothers; yet it was with an effort that he turned his immediate attention to Mary. Another form stood between her and him. Robson's address, however, recalled him to the existing state of things. He gently withdrew Mary from her mother's arms, and whispered

that it was time. "I was afraid that this would have come too late," he said, as he placed something in her hand. Mary received it with a meaning smile:—"You will wear this for our sakes, Ellen;" and she advanced towards her with a bracelet, which she attempted to clasp upon her arm; but at that moment her hand was not very steady, and Lord Raymond did it instead. "For *your* sake she will," he said; and there was something of melancholy reproach in his tone, which thrilled to Ellen's heart; for involuntarily she had drawn back at the word "our." "It is Mary's present," he continued; "you will not refuse it from a sister."

"No; certainly not," Ellen replied; "I am too glad to call her such, to refuse her any thing; but I was so startled by the magnificence of the present, I lost all power of thanking her. I never possessed any thing so splendid before."

It was certainly a splendid composition of

diamonds, and emeralds, and massive gold ; such a composition as gentle ladies love to wear—for it was ornamental, and a bracelet, and few had such to clasp upon their arms. Yet, had any thing so weighty been made of iron, and rivetted on the leg of a rough felon, the sight of it would have half broken the philanthropic Howard's heart !

But it was not upon the diamonds and emeralds that Ellen's attention was fixed ; there was more to attract in the simple date which was engraved upon the clasp—"June 18, 18—." That was all—the year was omitted, which was very careless. Ellen's colour changed at the sight of it ; and when she looked up, the flush upon Lord Raymond's cheek was deeper than that upon her own. "It is this day, Mary's wedding-day," he said, hastily.

"Yes ; and for the sake of that day, I shall value it, and sometimes wear it ; but not too

often ; only when I want to look particularly grand and fine. This simple chain, your first gift, Mary, shall ensure my daily remembrance of you."

Lord Raymond sighed, and Ellen turned away. The same recollection was in their minds. On the day to which Charles Dalrymple had referred, as that on which he and Elizabeth had met with such scandalous treatment, in not being duly informed of the time fixed for the wedding, Lord Raymond had been present at the discussion ; and when the eighteenth was mentioned, " Oh ! let it be that," he said, in a low voice to Ellen ; " already that day is consecrated—it is the anniversary of that on which we first met—' a white and blessed day ' to me."

Ellen heard as though she heard him not ; but the words had made an impression then, and now they seemed again to sound in her ear ; and she knew that it was not Mary's wedding-

day alone that the bracelet was meant to commemorate. To refuse it altogether, she thought, would betray too great consciousness; but she trusted that, taken by surprise as she was, she had done her utmost to mark that it was only as Mary's gift she accepted it. Still she wished that such a thing had never been thought of. She was very sure that every body would guess that there was something mysterious in the date. It was very odd; though the letters were so small, they were very conspicuous; they had twice caught her eye, as she and Lady Raymond slowly followed the others down stairs.

“Now, it's my belief,” Mr. Johnson said to Mrs. Robson, as the carriage drove away, “that we shall soon have another wedding. I have always been remarkable for transmitting dumb looks into words; and there was one of your young lord's, as he handed my young lady into the coach, that was not looked for nothing.

And if that come to pass, a most beautiful bride *she* will be."

There was an emphasis upon the word *she*, at which Mrs. Robson's zealous soul took fire. "I am very ambiguous," she answered tartly, "as to who you mean by your lady. I thought we were both in the same service, and served the same lady; but it seems that my ideas want mending. I am surprised, Mr. Johnson, when there was a real bride in French blonde to look at, that you should have nothing better to do than to set up brides in the air. Miss Spencer's looks have never been sneezed at; and you may take my word for it, now she's Lady Lindsay, she'll be reckoned a perfect beauty."

"As my poor judgment goes, not so perfect a one as my Lady Ellen. You will excuse my saying so, but I cannot all at once divest myself of the old establishment. My lord's choice must, of course, be mine; and my new lady has a very lady-like presence, and seems to have

most lady-like ways, and I have no doubt that we shall agree very well together; and, considering how long my lord and I have lived together in the single state of liberty, it is not of every one I would say that. Still there is a something—a sort of *jenessy cwor*—about Lady Ellen, that hits my taste more:—and taste is every thing, you know, Mrs. Robson.”

“ I know no such thing, Mr. Johnson; and I don’t know what you mean by your *jenessy cwors*. I am content with speaking my mother-tongue, and do not pick up expressions from my betters. Perhaps it will not be too much trouble for your *jenessy* worship to come and help carry down the imperial: my share of the packing’s done. It will not be my fault if things are not ready. And would you be so very condescending, as to see to the proper spreading out of my cloak on the dicky behind. If we do not look to our own comforts, nobody will look for us, and we have twenty miles to go together. My poor

lady! how she will feel, losing me and her daughter all at once. A great sacrifice she has made of me, indeed; and I don't half like the looks of the young thing she has taken."

"And I do, forty times better than yours, old quiz!" was Johnson's thought, as he followed her up stairs, with a proper share of submission; though he was very seriously distressed when he considered what a dowdy figure she would look, sitting by his side on the dicky.

There was bidden to that wedding but one person besides the immediate connections of the two families: and he an old friend of the Mordaunts. Ellen, with her own bright smile, had bid him come; and never yet, to that bright smile, had he refused any thing. Considering the awful melancholy of the ceremony, the feelings of that friend were less harassed than might have been expected. He foreboded no positive evil from this marriage. As Lord Raymond had said, Mary was the sort of soft-hearted creature,

who would be content to worship Lindsay, if he would only let her do so; and there was nobody likely to submit to such humble adoration with better grace. Still the reflections of that friend, during the solemn ceremony, were any thing but hopeful ones. Not but what Lady Lindsay's fate promised to be as happy as that of most other married women's. She would probably be sick and uncomfortable during one half of her life,—nursing and teaching, the other; for she was certain to take the domestic line. If her sons should turn out dull and cloudy, she must work and plot to set them forward in life; if wild and unmanageable, she must weep such tears as mothers only shed. If her daughters should be ugly and awkward, she must keep them the unwilling inmates of a home, from which they will be longing to escape; if beautiful and graceful, they will marry and be lost to her. To her husband she must be, as she this moment vows, a loving, true, obedient wife;

and she will be blessed indeed if he should prove a faithful, true, though exacting husband. Still her life will pass in a round of useful duties; and her old age will not be lonely; and she has a house and establishment of her own, and a name and station in society; and she is a wife, and can but be a widow—never, what all such happy wives and mothers mention in whispered tones of pity, a contented, or discontented, old maid.

Notwithstanding the distinguished appearance of the bride, it was difficult not sometimes to forget *her* in looking at Ellen. She stood beside her aged father, in her brilliant blooming youth; and as she saw the tremulous motion of his lip, when his eye rested on his son, she drew his arm through hers, and he seemed to lean heavily on his slight and beautiful support.

All events, all changes, whether they be for good or evil, bring matter for painful agitation to “the old and stricken in years.” They have

learnt the lesson which life is meant to teach, that every situation has its own draw-backs. Their own powers of active enjoyment are expended, and they tremble at the rashness of those they love, as they see them extending the circle of their interests and their pleasures,—leaving fresh space for trouble and sorrow to enter.

Frederick Percival too was there. He stood with folded arms on the other side of Ellen, and the proud expression of his noble countenance softened, as his gaze was fixed upon her. As the service proceeded, that gaze grew still more tender; and when the impressive tones of the Bishop of —— had ceased, and all had gathered round to congratulate the bride, Frederick stooped and took Ellen's hand, and said a few whispered words; and then, even if multitudes had not confessed it before, it must have been felt that his was

“ A voice, whose simplest tone
Thrilled with a magic all its own :”—

for its effect upon Ellen was magical indeed. The colour faded from her cheek, and she glanced almost wildly towards the altar. The bride and bridegroom were gone; but Lord Raymond was still standing there.

“Let us go,” she said hurriedly. “I must see the last of Mary.”

As she spoke, she disengaged her hand from Percival, and the bracelet fell at her feet. Lord Raymond sprang forward, and again clasped it on her arm.

“It was I who first placed it there. Oh! never again let it be displaced by him.”

These words were rapidly uttered, and were meant for no ear but Ellen’s; but it seemed that they did not reach her. She took Frederick’s arm, and joined the others in the vestry, where Lady Lindsay, for the last time, was signing her maiden name.

Lord Lindsay, to whom all leave-taking was irksome, as likely to degenerate into a regular

scene, cut the matter very short ; and five minutes after, Johnson and Robson, Newman's greys, and the yellow jackets, were seen making rapid progress towards Lord Raymond's seat in Hertfordshire.

All the assistants were assembled at a breakfast in Grosvenor Square, which was as heavy and languid an affair as might have been expected, where the component parts of the society consisted of individuals brought together from necessity, not choice. Many of the Spencer family Ellen had never seen before ; and though she did her utmost to rush into acquaintance with them at once, she made little more of them than making them all eat and drink.

Lady Elizabeth was remarkably grand and supercilious ; but she had an old maiden aunt of Lady Lindsay's sitting on one side of her, and a boy cousin on the other, upon whom her superciliousness was utterly thrown away, they

were both so busily employed in eating chocolate sugar-plums.

Mr. Dalrymple was suffering very much under a heavy accumulation of small fidgets. He was fidgetty about keeping out his horses so long—fidgetty, because he had not been regularly introduced to all the new connections—fidgetty, because Lindsay had most unaccountably forgotten to take the slightest notice of him, and Ellen said nothing about expecting to see him and Elizabeth at dinner:—for he had reckoned upon dining as well as breakfasting in Grosvenor Square.

That old and valued friend we have spoken of, was a little discomfited himself. Five-and-twenty years before, he had admired Lady Raymond most violently and hopelessly:—it could scarcely have been otherwise than hopelessly; for he was very poor, not too good-looking, and never opened his lips in general society. This morning he had reckoned upon handing her in

to breakfast; but she went home before it began—to cry, probably, because she had achieved the principal object of her life,—an excellent marriage for her daughter.

Then he missed his favourite Edward. He had not been prepared for his absence, and augured ill from his having changed all his plans, and hurried out of town just two days before his brother's marriage. It did not seem natural, and it distressed him very much;—for he really seemed to love the boy the better for his very follies: they kept his fears and his imagination continually on the stretch; and every body loves best the thing they fear for; or, perhaps, nobody takes the trouble to fear but for the thing they love.

He was uneasy too about his other favourite, Ellen, and her two young supporters, Lord Raymond and Frederick Percival. He could not make out to his satisfaction what they were all at. By the laws of the land Ellen could not

marry them both; yet, as far as he could judge, both were very much bent upon marrying her. Frederick seemed to have thrown off the shyness natural to him, and to be talking with great animation; and Lord Raymond's laugh was loud and frequent, quite unlike his usual laugh; and it seemed forced. Then it ceased altogether, and there came the sound of a heavy sigh.

"You have lost your beautiful bracelet, Lady Ellen," Miss Margaret Dalrymple screamed out in an agony.

"No," Ellen, answered quietly, "I have only taken it off and put it away."

CHAPTER XIII.

I had forgotten—but must not forget—
An orator, the latest of the session,
Who had delivered well a very set
Smooth speech, his first and maidenly transgression.
DON JUAN.

Ambition, how art thou travestied, when
Suggesting petty arms to little men ;
Bent upon some poor triumph—shewing off,
And gaining nothing save the witling's scoff.
ANON.

“ HERE’S an invitation for some of you, girls,”
said Mrs. Beaumont, handing an open note to
Maria, who had no sooner read it than she
tossed it on the table with an air of sovereign
contempt.

“ I shall not go for one ; you may do as you
please, Eliza.”

That Eliza was likely to do without Maria’s

permission, which only conveyed to her that, by not pleasing to do as Maria did, she should displease her very much indeed.

“ Read it loud, my dear,” said her mother ; “ that is, if you can. Mrs. Harrison’s hand alters sadly. I am afraid, poor woman, that her eyes are beginning to fail.”

“ I can read it very well, mamma,” replied Eliza, who was very impatient to get the matter well settled.

“ MY DEAR MRS. BEAUMONT,

“ Mr. Harrison had an early visit from your husband and son this morning, on their way to the City, and they have kindly promised to dine with us. I understand from Mr. Beaumont, that you are expecting your sister, Mrs. Humphries, to pass the evening with you, and that we must not expect the pleasure of seeing you ; but, perhaps, you will spare us one of the girls. We have two or three people to

dinner—Mr. and Lady E. Dalrymple among them.

“ Yours sincerely,

“ J. HARRISON.”

“ I suppose, though she does not seem to contemplate the possibility, that ‘the girls’ may be allowed an opinion of their own on the subject,” said Maria, “and I have no notion of going anywhere as a mere stop-gap. It is quite evident that their original party has failed, and that we are only asked to fill up.”

Eliza felt that she had a very difficult part to play. She must not make the prospect too tempting, or Maria might take into her head to sacrifice her pride, and go. Still, as she was very much bent upon accepting the invitation herself, she must make a tolerable case of it. A little gentle contradiction too might be of use—it would infallibly irritate Maria, and induce her to cling more closely to her original decision.

“It does look a little like what you say, indeed,” she answered. “I was sure, as I read the note, that you would understand it in that light. Still, I dare say that they meant the invitation kindly. The Dalrymples dine there, you see.”

“They meant to shew off, and nothing else. Can anything on earth be more absurd, than thinking it an honour to have that proud Lady Elizabeth, and her tiresome, silly husband? You may be certain, too, that they will have Mr. Butler there, that we may see how attentive he is to Kate; and he is the sort of man I should particularly object to meet; he really looks too vulgar.”

“Then,” said Eliza, with an air of resignation, “if you will not go, I suppose that I must. It is quite sure, that papa will make a point of having one of us with him.”

“If you had rather not, Eliza, you had better let me,” said Anne, actually panting at

her own temerity. "I should like it very much indeed."

"Nobody doubts that," Maria rejoined. "You have been wild after the Harrisons, ever since John offered you his arm at the play; but you are rather too young, child, to put yourself forward in the dining way; besides, Eliza is actually dying to go. I saw that from the very first, only she likes to make a merit of every thing she does."

The point being settled in this amiable manner, nothing more remained to be said; and upon the whole, Eliza thought that she had carried it very cheaply.

The Beaumonts found a very large party assembled, when they arrived in Harley Street. There was something in the look of it, which gave instant promise of a grand, heavy, hot dinner—a regular turbot-and-lobster-sauce affair. When the Harrisons gave dinners, they took great pains that the company should

be well assorted. People have different ideas upon that subject. Some get together guests, who know each other well—live in the same set—have the same political opinions—and know pretty well before-hand, every word the others are going to utter. These dinners the world have agreed to call the pleasantest. Others ask five or six individuals, who have a great reputation for cleverness, to meet each other, and are surprised to find that extreme dullness is the result—never dreaming that those who are clever by profession, particularly dislike opening their lips in a society of which they are not the sole presiding deity. Others, again, open their visiting books, and ask, at hazard, all those to whom they think it necessary and expedient to give a dinner. At their tables individuals, not upon speaking terms—virulent political adversaries—the man who has challenged the other man to fight a duel—the woman who has taken away the

other woman's character,—all run a great chance of meeting. These dinners may, by chance, turn out amusing, and sometimes give London something to talk about for a week.

The Harrisons assorted according to a method of their own. Once a year they asked all their most distinguished acquaintances,—the most distinguished in any way, for any thing,—for rank, fashion—wealth—authorship—stock-jobbing—radicalism. Their ideas as to what constituted a distinguished dining individual were very extended.

On this day, the Dalrymples were the representatives of rank and fashion. Although Elizabeth talked of it for a fortnight beforehand, as a bore and a condescension, she rather liked a dinner at the Harrisons; she was sure to be made much of there; every word she uttered had its due weight. They passed six months of the year, in a substantial red-brick house, within a mile of Mordaunt Castle; and

Elizabeth could look back to a time in their lives, when she and Ellen considered it something of a treat to go and drink tea there, in a homely kind of way. It was pleasant to shew herself among them now, in all the powerful grandeur of a rich married woman.

As to Charles, he liked the fuss of dining out anywhere. He sometimes wondered that they were not invited to dine out oftener. Still he had his grievance. Ellen had been asked to meet them, and had sent her excuse, because she was engaged at the Hamiltons. Now he had an idea that Ellen lived in what he called the very highest set, and was very much the fashion. He read over her cards of invitation, and wondered, and wondered again, why Elizabeth, with himself as an appendage, did not receive the same. She visited at the same houses, and he was very particular about leaving his own card.

He had happened to be calling at Grosvenor Square, when the Harrison invitation arrived,

and hurried home to tell Elizabeth that Ellen meant to meet them. It was, therefore, a personal affront to him, that before she had finally committed herself, by writing her acceptance, a rescue came, in the shape of a note from Lady Hamilton, whose house was one of the pleasantest in London. Ellen was unpardonable for preferring being amused out of his society, when she had the alternative of being bored in it. It was quite absurd that she could not give up her fine friends for one single evening.

The Beaumonts, as Maria had discovered, were only asked to fill up. Mr. Roach, the ponderous-looking member for the county of —, was obliged to attend the House upon a corn-law motion; and the great artist, Mr. Trigge, who had married the great genius, Miss Dawson, had been suddenly summoned to the country house of his most liberal patron. The Beaumonts were common-place, to be sure, to

be admitted to the crack dinner of the year ; but there was no awkwardness about asking them at a few hours' notice ; and, as Mrs. Harrison observed, though Richard never said much, his loud laugh sounded cheerful, and would fill up the gaps, if conversation should flag.

Mr. Butler of course was there : every meeting now was a crisis : his proposal might be listened to any moment, and not be considered premature. Then there was an East India director ; a young radical of great promise ; a German *attaché* ; and a lank-haired individual, in spectacles, evidently an author.

Though Elizabeth did not know one of them by name or sight, they were soon enlightened as to her being the great lady of the plot. She would have been flattered could she have heard John point her out to Mr. Butler, as "the sister of my intimate friend, Lindsay." She sate at the head of the table, between Mr. Harrison and the director, in a very condescending mood.

Kate and Mr. Butler were also satisfactorily settled next to each other; though Eliza asserted, when she gave an account of the dinner at home, that he had been very much struck by her, and would have offered her his arm, if Kate had not cut in, and made it impossible. The promising young radical was particularly pleased at being in company with a “lady”—any body—any thing; and Mr. Harrison, whose system it was to hate the aristocracy in general, was only the more devoted to his own particular exceptions.

The first course was over, and Mrs. Harrison said to herself, for the twentieth time, that the dinner was going off well. Julia and the young radical,—Eliza and the German *attaché*,—kept up a gentle murmur of conversation. Kate and Mr. Butler were more than the world,—they were dinner to each other;—they looked and talked too much to eat. Richard’s laugh at John’s jokes was very hilarious. John him-

self was a little vexed that he should be at fault, when Richard asked for an account of the wedding : he was obliged to confess that he had not been there. " I do assure you, my dear fellow," he said, confidentially, " that I am glad it was so. It was a sad business. I look upon Lindsay as utterly lost to me. No wives, you know, can tolerate their husbands' former friends." And then, being anxious to change the conversation, he addressed himself across the table to Mr. Beaumont.

" Well, sir, and what is your opinion of young Horrock's maiden speech? In our set we consider it as a first-rate effort."

" Then our opinions differ. I read, or rather, glanced my eye over it, and blushed for the flippant impertinence of so young a man."

" Come, sir, confess," said the rising radical, " you would have admired his eloquence more, if he had spoken in favour of existing abuses, instead of against them. But these are not

times when such can quietly be allowed to exist. The people!—the enlightened people ——”

“The enlightened idiots!” interrupted Mr. Beaumont, in a tone of strong indignation. “Tut, man, you do not know what you are talking about—how should you at your age? It is enough to make one sick with disgust, to hear a parcel of boys, just come from school, spouting out their crude nonsense in the same walks where Pitt and Burke have spoken before them. If my old friend Horrocks were alive, it would half break his heart to hear his son praised by a set of levellers and radicals, bent upon doing away with all existing constitutions.”

“Particularly with little snug West Indian sinecures,” said the radical, with a provoking smile.

“Old Beaumont has met with his match,” whispered Mr. Harrison to Elizabeth; “he will not parry that in a hurry. My young friend

has hit the right nail on the head there. It is not often that I am mistaken in my judgment of character; and you may take my word for it, he has that in him which may make him the most distinguished man of his day."

"Indeed!" said Elizabeth, "*le désagrément de sa physionomie donne de grandes idées des qualités qu'on ne connaît pas.*"

"I thought that you would agree with me," he answered, looking very much puzzled and delighted.

In the meantime the argument was raging at the other end of the table. Young Horrocks, who was not much to any body when it began, was now alternately a demi-god or a monster. Mr. Harrison was beginning to look red and restless, and evidently only waited for an opening to throw himself into the thick of the fire.

Mr. Beaumont soon gave that, by asserting, that no man of property, in his right senses, would allow a radical to cross his doors. From

that moment the chance of coming to any thing like a right understanding grew hopeless: each talked on as loud as he could, without listening to one word uttered by his opponent.

“ Oh ! John, John,” said Mrs. Harrison, reproachfully, “ did not I beg you before dinner to keep clear of politics. You know when it comes to that, that your father and Mr. Beaumont cannot keep their tempers.”

John answered by a shrug, and Richard’s laugh grew nervous and convulsive. The *attaché* was delighted. The present scene would fill many pages of his note-book, under the head “ Political Enthusiasm.”

Dessert was now on the table ; still the argument went on. Young Horrocks had faded from the scene—Mr. Harrison was haranguing at one end of the table, upon pensions and sinecures—Mr. Beaumont at the other, upon spoliation and vested rights.

It is said, that when the elements are raging

round a sinking ship, the hoarse whisper of the captain can be distinguished amidst the roaring of the storm. Certain it is that, at this moment, the small voice of Charles Dalrymple made itself heard, asking for information :

“ Pray, what are vested rights ? ”

Mr. Beaumont stopped to enlighten him. Mr. Harrison joined in, to make the explanation clearer. They grew dry and business-like, and perfectly agreed in their views. This brought on a lull, and gave them time to get calm. Mr. Harrison took an hospitable turn, passed the wine, and was afraid that Lady Elizabeth could not have been very much amused by their little discussion.

Mr. Beaumont wiped his forehead, drew a long breath, and said civil things to Mrs. Harrison, about the good looks of her daughter Kate. The young radical again devoted himself to Julia, and congratulated her upon pos-

sessing such liberal principles ; for she had advanced two or three propositions of her own, which he naturally inferred were on his side of the question. As they were perfect nonsense, it was fortunate that nobody had thought of listening to them. As to Kate and Mr. Butler, they were still looking and talking. Not one syllable of what had passed had ever reached their ears. They were only glad that the others seemed to have so much to say, because they could talk to each other without being overheard.

Elizabeth leant back in her chair, feeling both stunned and bored by the noise ; and when the East India director said something across her to Mr. Harrison, she actually yawned in his face. The others talked, without much thinking what they were saying. They were busy revolving in their minds all the provoking things their adversaries had advanced during the debate, and were inwardly groaning

over the lamentable want of presence of mind which had prevented them from giving in return many sharp retorts, which now struck them as eligible.

Under these circumstances, Mrs. Harrison's signal for retiring was eagerly attended to. At the same time she cast an emphatic look towards John, which he answered by a nod. The look plainly expressed—"Do, for mercy's sake, keep your father and Mr. Beaumont quiet."

"Mamma, you will not forget to make out what you can about Lady Ellen," Julia whispered to her mother, before she withdrew to the other end of the room, to join Eliza and Kate in a deeply confidential communication about Mr. Butler.

But a great deed remained to be done before Mrs. Harrison thought herself privileged to ask for information. Elizabeth was to be implored to put her feet upon the sofa—No, was not she accustomed to that?—Then a foot-

stool—Mrs. Harrison must insist upon that. Lady Elizabeth must not refuse to take the advice of an old motherly person like her. It put her in mind of old times to have her among them again. She was sadly disappointed not to have Lady Ellen too; and that put her in mind—might she take the liberty to ask, if any of the reports about Lady Ellen were true?

“Reports! What reports?” Elizabeth had never heard any.

“Was that possible? Then, of course, there could be no truth in them; and I suspected as much,” Mrs. Harrison added; “for we heard one thing one day, and another, another. First, Mr. Percival—then, Lord Raymond—then, Mr. Percival again. It made it very difficult to know what to believe.”

“Is Ellen, then, supposed to be going to be married to one, or both of them?” Elizabeth asked.

“To both of them! Oh, my dear Lady

Elizabeth, that is so like you," said Mrs. Harrison, growing shy and frightened; for she stood very much in awe of Elizabeth's sarcastic manner. "Kate, my dear, what was it you heard the other night about Lady Ellen? Those girls have better heads than mine for news."

"It was I who told you, mamma," answered Julia, importantly. "It was to me it was said. Mrs. Dillon, you know, she it was who told me, that Lady Ellen's marriage to Mr. Percival was declared, absolutely declared. Maria Beaumont was standing near me at the time, and I would not tell her, because I knew that she would be so triumphant."

"And did Mrs. Dillon also tell you that Ellen's marriage was declared, absolutely declared to Lord Raymond?" persisted Elizabeth.

"No, not Mrs. Dillon; but two or three others talked of it as very likely to be. Mr. Sturton, I know, for one, said, 'So there is

going to be a double connection between the Mordaunt and Raymond families!"

"I wish that I could get into the Sturton and Dillon set. They seem to be very cunning people, with great inventive powers," said Elizabeth.

"Mrs. Dillon is a very superior woman indeed," Mrs. Harrison answered eagerly, "and gives a great many balls. I am sure that she would be delighted to have the pleasure of being introduced to you."

"I do assure you, Lady Elizabeth," said Julia, colouring a little for her mother's simplicity, "they were not the only people who talked of these reports. I heard of them in all corners of the room. I began at last to think that Lady Ellen must be going to be married to somebody."

"I do not wonder that you came to that conclusion, if she were going to be married at all," answered Elizabeth.

“But as you seem to think that there is no truth in all this, I will make a point of saying so every where,” said Julia, who was very anxious to have her authority to quote one way or the other; but in this she was baffled by Elizabeth.

“I have never thought on the subject. There is no knowing what I may think when I set about it. But have you no other news to tell me? Surely Ellen cannot be the only person whose affairs interest Mrs. Dillon. Let me hear all her news—all her scandal, if she had any.”

This was a delightful opening. Eliza, who was getting a little tired of hearing “all the particular things which must mean something,” said by Mr. Butler, took the opportunity to join the others.

Kate followed. It was much the same to her where she was: every minute must be wasted till the gentlemen came up. She

wished that Mr. Beaumont had not been asked, he always made them sit so long.

There was no fear that conversation would languish now. Elizabeth had anecdotes without end poured out upon her; some containing exaggerated details of facts totally without interest at the time they happened; others affecting the characters of the most respectable of her acquaintance. No doubt was entertained of their truth—no doubt *could* be entertained; a lady who knew had said this—an authority that could not be named, might be quoted for that. Many things which had passed before Elizabeth's eyes, which had been spoken in her hearing, and had faded from her recollection, she found had been talked over and commented upon for months, in the set to which the Harrisons were confined. Her unfeigned astonishment at some of the charges she heard, went for little; her denials for less. Of course she stood up for her caste, and, after all, the Harrisons

had opportunities of assuring themselves that what they advanced was true: they knew (by sight) some of the individuals of whom they talked.

It is the fashion to speak of the higher classes, as if the clause in the catechism which warns against "evil speaking, lying, and slandering," were directed solely to them. Now, whatever their other vices may be, these are certainly not the most prevalent; these abound much more in the class immediately below them. As they have none higher than themselves, they have none to envy; they have no temptation to depreciate those whom they cannot equal. There are individual cases, to be sure, of private pique, and clashing interests, and treacherous friends. Where human creatures congregate together, there will be malice, hatred and strife; but these evil passions, when they do arise in ill-regulated minds, are at least confined to the offending objects immediately about them; they

never dream of extending them beyond their own peculiar circle. Mr. Brown might talk evening after evening to Mrs. Smith; and Mrs. Smith's damaged character, and Mr. Smith's wilful blindness, could be nothing to them. But not only have the anxious friends of the Smiths and the Browns to watch over their wicked ways, but they have also friends who, being invited once a year to Lady A.'s parties, or Lady B.'s breakfasts, are able to say how shameful it is to see Mr. C. standing by Lady D.'s chair, and talking, actually talking to her, in spite of that paragraph in the *Age* which could only mean them; and they can shake their heads mournfully over that pretty little Mrs. E., who they understand comes out constantly by herself, while her husband is at Crockford's, and who therefore *must* come to harm sooner or later!

No; it is not in what is called the great world, that malignant tales of scandal are

originated,—there is literally not time to compose them. Minor events crowd too quickly on each other. Trace them, and they will be found to have taken their source in some obscure country neighbourhood, or some cockney coterie, where they have been talked over, and added to, for months before they burst into light.

“And what were all those stories, my dear, that we heard about Mrs. Howard and Miss Rivers?” Mrs. Harrison took advantage of a pause to ask; as, she said, she had not so good a head for news as the girls.

“Nothing, mamma, nothing,” Julia answered, at the same time darting a look of consternation towards Kate. “They were all nonsense,—there was not a word of truth in them, you know.”

“Surely that cannot deter *you* from repeating them,” Lady Elizabeth said encouragingly.

“I forget them quite,—do not you, Kate?” said Julia.

“I do not think I ever heard them,” answered Kate.

“Dear me, girls, what memories you have!” said their mother. “What will they be at my age? You must remember surely—something about the aunt and the niece being in love with the same person, and about his making up to both of them at the same time. Such a strange, shocking history! Who can he be? I shall think of his name presently. He is somebody we all know,—that I am sure of. Let me see: it was after the last party at Mordaunt House that we all talked of it. Oh—” and Mrs. Harrison broke off, and coloured crimson.

“You remember now?” asked Elizabeth calmly.

An awkward pause followed. Kate and Julia had actually lost their breaths with agitation, during their mother’s efforts of memory: it was something, that in the triumph of having caught it, they were spared the shock of hear-

ing Mr. Glanville's name come out at once. As it was, nothing remained to be done but to start a fresh subject of conversation as soon as possible ; so of course nobody could think of anything to say. Eliza Beaumont, upon principle, kept a dignified silence : it was right that she, who had always claimed Edward as her property, should feel aggrieved. Altogether it was a bad business,—a conversational mess. Kate was not the only person who was glad when the gentlemen came up.

The Dalrymples did not remain much longer ; and Mrs. Harrison was left to ejaculate, and wonder, and lament at her ease. “After all,” she said, “her manner was not a bit more stiff and difficult to understand after I said this than it was before ; perhaps she did not make out at last who I meant.” But this was a forlorn hope, in which nobody could encourage her.

The Beaumonts staid long enough for Eliza

to see Kate and Mr. Butler sit down with great apparent interest to the study of some prints, at a little table, which really looked placed for the very purpose, at the farthest end of the room. She once or twice suggested to Julia, that Mr. Butler looked her way, as if he expected that she would join them : but upon this point Julia was quite unpersuadable : she was sure that they were much happier without her.

“So there is a regular plot against the poor man, and he must propose, whether he like it or not,” said Maria Beaumont, after Eliza had poured out, at home, her narration of the events of the evening.

“Harrison will get himself into a scrape, some of these days, if he carries his radical notions so far. I could not help hinting as much to him, this evening,” said Mr. Beaumont, who thought it as well to prepare his wife for the account of the discussion, which must eventually reach her.

She instantly took the alarm. "I hope, my dear, that you did not get into one of your violent arguments with him."

"Oh, no, my dear! nothing but a little skirmish."

"Nothing but a little skirmish!" repeated Richard, and his laugh was loud and prolonged.

"Did Mrs. Harrison say anything about David? Have they heard from him since he sailed?"

"She never mentioned him, mamma."

"Ah! I dare say not: it must be a sore subject. Poor woman! it must be hard work to give grand dinners when her head is full of domestic troubles;" and, again sighing deeply, Mrs. Beaumont lighted her hand-candlestick and waddled off to bed.

CHAPTER XV.

“ Different it is true,
But having all the self-same ends in view ;
To raise their own importance, and impress
A sense on others of their littleness ;
To search for tender places, and when found,
Wound to the quick, and shew they meant to wound.”

BYRON.

POOR Lady Elizabeth ! It was difficult to see her without pitying her ; and yet perhaps the pity was as uncalled-for as Mrs. Beaumont’s for Mrs. Harrison.

It is true, Lady Elizabeth had her faults, and

plenty of them ;—but so had many others, who were less unpopular than she was. It was in the *style* of her faults that she was unfortunate, if such an expression may be used. She was intolerant, and proud, and conceited. Now, conceit and pride it is not in human nature to forgive ; which is very strange ; for in general the forgiveness would be mutual. However, it was not for that she was to be pitied. Conceit, if there is enough of it, is not an uncomfortable possession ; for it sets all attempts to mortify it at defiance. But to have Charles Dalrymple as her inseparable companion ; to have him there—always there—fretting—fidgetting—questioning—doubting—never seeing anything in the right light—quite incompetent to understand a joke—always talking—never conversing—it was terrible to think of : she really *was* to be pitied.

Perhaps something of the same conviction was in Elizabeth's mind, as she leant back in the carriage, after having escaped from the

Harrison dinner. She had a great deal she wanted to say, and nobody near worth saying it to. There were two or three points upon which she would have been glad to ask her husband what to think; but then she had a husband who was sure to think wrong; and she should set him off questioning and wondering; and she was too sleepy to bear that. The fact was, though it would have been quite beneath her to allow the Harrisons to suppose that they had it in their power to say anything that could startle or interest her, she had been very much startled and interested by their intelligence about Ellen. Not that she believed a syllable of her marriage being settled, with either Lord Raymond or Mr. Percival; but still her eyes were opened to possibilities, which had never struck her before.

She had been so used, in past years, to see Frederick Percival much more constantly with the family than he was now, it had never once entered her mind that he could be particularly

devoted to Ellen; and as to Lord Raymond, when she had seen him in Ellen's society, she would have said that his manner was particularly cold. Considering the connection between the two families, she had sometimes wondered that he was not to be found oftener in Grosvenor Square. To be sure, he might be there, at times when she was not;—the world might have reason for what it said: sometimes it had, though not often.

She was conscious that Ellen was not apt to talk confidentially to her, and perhaps a little conscious that she did not deserve that she should do so. In fact, nobody ever is confidential, but upon an understanding that they are to be listened to, sympathised with, and advised, exactly in the manner they themselves think best. Sometimes it requires great tact to find out what that is; but it can be done, and is done by confidantes of the first order. Lady Elizabeth had this tact, but she made

a bad use of it ;—she never could resist saying the very thing which was most likely to grate against the little unexpressed feelings which wanted encouragement. She knew that it was very wrong, and not good policy ; but she could not help that. It was her way of amusing herself. But what amuses some people, annoys others : that was her case, and Ellen's ; so Ellen kept all that was interesting to herself.

As to the reports about Edward, they were unpleasant, and Elizabeth meant to give Ellen the full benefit of hearing them ; but as far as she herself was concerned, she saw no use in worrying about them. It would be so inconvenient, just as she was in the first stage of a promising friendship, to listen to anything likely to disturb it. Mrs. Howard and Harriet Rivers had been with her that very morning, and made themselves particularly pleasant ; they seemed to be just as happy when talking to her, as they

were when talking to Edward. All, therefore, that was said about them was thorough scandal; and now that Edward had left London, even that would die away. That she had ever fancied anything of the kind herself, had totally escaped her recollection;—at least she was determined not to recollect it; which comes to the same end.

The next morning she set off early, on a voyage of discovery to Grosvenor Square. She did not give Ellen the advantage of knowing what she had heard; but she talked of Frederick Percival — wished he would marry — thought it would improve him if he had a wife—she was at all events sure that he would be the happier for it. Very likely—Ellen thought.

“In fact,” said Elizabeth, “I am rather tired of him, as he is now: are not you? We have all said all we have got to say about his cleverness, and his eloquence, and his high character, and so on. It is tiresome to go on for ever,

praising a person for the same thing. I wish he would take up a new character now—do not you?”

“No,” Ellen answered, laughing: “I cannot say that his high character the least hurts me; and I cannot flatter you with the hope that a wife will wish to change it, or that he will marry a woman who could wish it changed. No; whatever her other feelings may be, the wife of Frederick Percival cannot but feel proud of his virtues and his talent.”

“You are very eloquent about him, Ellen. If I did not know the terms you are upon, I should almost fancy it possible that you were to be the proud wife yourself. Not that I think it would particularly suit you to be a politician’s wife. In fact, I always think it must be a miserable situation to hold. She must have so many lonely hours. What with his office, and the House, she can hardly ever see her husband; and when he does come home, his head

must be too full of political affairs, to talk to her."

"Let us hope that he might think her reasonable enough to talk to as a companion, and trustworthy enough to confide in as a friend."

"Oh! poor creature! she would be worse off than ever then! the peace of her life would be utterly gone, unless she were to give up all her friends, and deny herself to all her acquaintance. If any public secret were to become known,—and all secrets public and private are known,—she would be supposed to have betrayed it, either by her words, or by her looks;—for she must never look low, when she *is* low; or happy, when she is happy. It would be very impolitic."

"But he would not be always in office probably; and his wife might be happy, whatever *he* might be, when he was in opposition."

"Happy! and he otherwise! Not if she were a good wife. And she would have to re-

trench too;—which is always disagreeable. No! though you know, Ellen, I am often preaching to you in favour of your marrying early, for yours is a peculiar situation—so independent! I own I am glad that you and Frederick never took it into your heads to fall in love with one another. You have had an escape there.”

Elizabeth now paused for Ellen’s confession, if she had one to make; but none came. Upon the whole, it was rather a disappointment to her. She was quite sincere in wishing Ellen to marry. She was as tired of hearing of her admirers, as of Frederick’s eloquence. Their marriage would not be by any means an overpowering event. People would of course say that they had always foreseen it, and that it was the most natural thing in the world; and after that, little more remained to be said about it. Frederick would have neither time nor inclination to mix much in general society, and Ellen was not likely to go out without her husband.

Elizabeth's position in the world would, in fact, be higher than hers ; and now that she had taken the precaution beforehand of shewing Ellen that she should consider her as anything but an object of envy, she was perfectly easy as to the event.

But her marriage with Lord Raymond would be a very different affair. There was no denying the melancholy fact ; he was decidedly the greatest *parti* in London. And such a man too ! Not a fault to be found with him. He was not only generally allowed to have every good quality under heaven, but every shining one too.

For the present, Elizabeth saw no use in letting Ellen know that it was even surmised that such a brilliant lot could be hers. If eventually the surmise should prove true, like any other trial in life, it must be borne with becoming philosophy. In the mean time, she had a few words to say about him, which Ellen, by

producing a letter from Lady Lindsay, gave her an opportunity of introducing.

“Poor little good thing! she does all her raptures very nicely,” was Elizabeth’s observation after having read it; “and I dare say that she is very happy. She probably does not understand Lindsay well enough to be afraid of him;—which is a mercy. By-the-bye, I have a plan for Lord Raymond. I do not see why he should not marry Harriet Rivers.”

“He! Lord Raymond marry Harriet Rivers? impossible! Elizabeth, you cannot be serious.”

“And why not? why should it be impossible? Is he in love with any body else?”

“He has never spoken three words in his life to Miss Rivers, has he?” said Ellen, returning Elizabeth’s question by another.

“Oh yes; he met her at my house the other morning, and talked a great deal to her; and, you know, he was amazingly struck by her beauty the night she made her appearance here;

and he said again that morning, how very striking it was. I really think it a promising speculation, and I am sure that I should rejoice at it. She is such a delightful girl, when you know her as well as I do."

Ellen suspected that she knew her better, but she did not say so; and, when Elizabeth proceeded to relate what absurd things Mrs. Harrison had said about Edward, she did not seem particularly amused by them:—"I remember that *you* fancied something of the kind about Mrs. Howard," she said gravely.

"Yes; but that was quite a fancy. She is an excellent little woman; not the least likely to get into that sort of scrape. It was all the fault of Edward's manner. He never can talk to any body for ten minutes, without committing them."

Elizabeth's visit was finished now. To be sure she had not made out much as to the state of Ellen's affections; but she could go away

with the comfortable conviction, that for the next five minutes at least, her reflections would not be too bright. She had always an unpleasant consciousness pressing upon her own mind; the consciousness of being married to a fool—a quiet manageable one—but still a fool. Now it was particularly disagreeable to be the only person with a grievance; so she felt relieved when she had done her best to provide one or two for other people. This is a very common feeling, but nobody owns to it.

On one point Elizabeth miscalculated: she might have talked on for ever about Lord Raymond and Frederick, without making the slightest impression upon Ellen. She had deep feelings of her own concerning them, into which Elizabeth could not penetrate. But the reports about Edward made her thoroughly uncomfortable. Not that she suffered her thoughts to dwell for a moment upon what Mrs. Harrison called her “strange shocking history.” Still

there certainly was a mystery about his intimacy with the Howards, and she was sorry to find that it was talked of in any way. She dreaded hearing that they were on the point of leaving London, and returning to Howard Lodge; which would again bring them into daily intercourse with Edward.

It was still early when Elizabeth left her. It could do Edward no good to sit down and worry about him; so Ellen put on her bonnet, and set off to take a walk in the Park, before the day should grow oppressively hot. It was an hour at which she felt pretty sure of meeting nobody she knew; and, in spite of the tall footman behind her, and the brown grass crackling beneath her feet, and the atmosphere *simmering* with incipient heat and dust, air and exercise did wonders for her. Her thoughts grew freer—fresher; life no longer seemed like the dark maze of troubles she had considered it but a few minutes before; she felt that to exist

was something; she even smiled, as recollections came over her of many such early walks, that she and Edward had taken together. In short, she was young, and her bright hour was upon her. She had no reason to give for the change; but so she felt; and hers was the season for feeling, not for reasoning.

As she crossed Park Lane, on her way home, she looked towards the Howard-house. We are very apt to look curiously at the outside of the habitation which shelters those who interest us, either pleasantly or unpleasantly; and yet the dirty red bricks, and faded window-blinds, have seldom any intelligence to give. The only food for speculation that met Ellen's eyes, was a hack-cabriolet standing at the door. The driver sat upon the steps, with his head leaning against the iron rails, in the attitude of sleep; the horse stood with his head drooping, and his ears lying back, as if he were bored as well as tired. It was evident that they had been wait-

ing there a long time. "Who was it likely to have brought? Probably somebody on business with Mr. Howard; or a master to teach the children; or——." Ellen's speculations were cut short:—the door opened, and Edward darted from the house into the cabriolet; the driver jumped into his seat; the skeleton of a horse raised its head, pricked up its ears, and galloped off at a pace which threatened to place many valuable lives in jeopardy; and Ellen, recovering from the violent start she had given, blushing for the half-smothered exclamation she had uttered, quietly pursued her way.

Nobody could have guessed that she had just caught a glimpse of a favourite brother, whom she had every reason to hope and believe was at least two hundred miles off. It must be a desperate case indeed, that can lead a well-dressed person to shew any thing like violent emotion in the streets of London. Ellen even heard and answered rationally a few words that

Lord Raymond addressed to her, as he turned into Grosvenor Gate for an early ride. She could not help fancying that he too had seen Edward, his manner was so grave; but, to be sure, it was often that now.

This was destined to be a morning of adventures. Two little children, with their nursery-maid, were walking before her:—"Look, Charlie; look!" said the eldest,—“what a great dog! is not he a beauty?” and she pointed to a Newfoundland dog, which had that moment been set at liberty by the servant who was leading him. The boy watched his obstreperous delight with considerable mistrust. “I don’t like him,” he answered; and he caught his nurse’s gown, and clung to her for protection.

“Oh fie! Master Charles, you a boy, and afraid; why, there’s your sister walking on by herself. Come, let me see you run after her, and behave like a man.”

“Cecy is bigger than I am,” said the boy,

pouting his little lip. Nevertheless he loosened his grasp, and did as he was told. The lesson was given at an unfortunate moment. The huge animal, his heart evidently overflowing with general benevolence, leaped upon him, and he fell violently on the pavement. Ellen waited with some trepidation for the cry that would follow, but there was no sound. "That's a good boy not to cry," said the nurse, bustling after him; "get up, dear, and tell us where the nasty beast has hurt him."

The child was still lying on the pavement, to all appearance lifeless. She tried to raise him in her arms, but there was neither sense nor motion. The dog, as if sensible of the mischief he had done, crouched by his little victim, and tried to lick his face. "Call him off, man; call him off!" screamed the woman frantically. "My God, he is dead!—he is killed!" and with that utter want of self-command which is so common in the lower classes, who are not used,

like their betters, to live “ a life of seeming,” she sank down on the pavement beside him, and helplessly wrung her hands.

Ellen looked at the lifeless picture of childish beauty before her, and her heart sickened as she thought of the parents whose treasure would be restored to them thus. Not a minute had yet elapsed, since she had been listening to the tones of his young voice,—so sudden had been the catastrophe ; but a crowd had already gathered around, and Ellen felt that something must be done. She begged one of the most respectable persons near her, to run for a doctor ; and finding it impossible to draw any thing like an intelligent answer from the nurse, she addressed herself to the little girl, and asked her name.

“ Cecy Howard ; and I shall be four years old to-morrow. Why does nurse cry so ? and why don’t Charley speak ?” and the poor child looked frightened and bewildered.

“ I know your mamma, Cecy ; and you shall

take me to her, will you? Nurse and Charley will come too." Ellen then having directed her footman to follow slowly with the still unconscious boy and his distracted attendant, set off on her melancholy errand, of breaking to Mrs. Howard the calamity which had befallen her.

"Can I be of no assistance?" said Lord Raymond, hastily joining her; I have heard all that has happened; only tell me, can I be of any use?" Ellen shook her head. "It was by mere chance that I turned my horse's head in this direction," he said, as if he felt that an apology was necessary for his presence; "and then, seeing the crowd, I galloped towards it, fearing—I know not what. You must let me take care of you."

Ellen did not refuse his offered arm; for, overcome by the scene she had witnessed, and dread of that which she had yet to encounter, she trembled violently, and could hardly support herself. Lord Raymond looked at her

compassionately,—“ Had you not better leave the task of preparation to me? I can see Howard,—I will do all that is necessary,—this has been such a trying morning to you.” Then, after a moment’s hesitation, he added, “ Could I have been mistaken, or was it Edward whom I saw?” The tears which stood in Ellen’s eyes were answer enough; and she attempted no other. “ Dear, dear Lady Ellen, this once let me speak to you as a friend, and do not shrink from me. Listen to me as if I were Edward himself, or,” he added with a troubled smile—“ Frederick Percival. If this sudden appearance of Edward’s has given you anxiety; if you fear some evil in this mystery; tell me if there is no possible way in which I can be of service to you, or rather to him. He is too generous to resent the interference of a friend?”

“ He would feel your kindness as I do,” Ellen answered; “ and, indeed, I am most grateful. But nothing can be done; I do not

even know where he is to be found. Say nothing of having seen him ; it would only make papa unhappy."

She spoke hurriedly, for they had reached Mr. Howard's house. He was out, the servant said ; and so was Miss Rivers. Ellen had no choice but to seek Mrs. Howard herself. Even at that moment the thought crossed her mind, that five minutes sooner she would have found Edward there ; and how would he have felt ?

One word sufficed to rouse the mother's fears. The sounds of feet and voices were heard in the hall ; and the wailing tones of a woman's voice. Who, that has been struck with sudden calamity, does not remember, with dreadful distinctness, every sight and sound of that fearful moment, when we feel that the hand of Heaven has fallen upon us, and know not what blessing has been brought low ?

Mrs. Howard neither shrieked nor trembled ; but she knelt breathlessly by the sofa on which

they had laid her lifeless boy, "Hush, woman—hush!" she said to the nurse, whose grief was still vociferous, "you frighten me—you frighten him—he is not dead. I tell you it is impossible—that clock has not struck since he was playing here, and laughing joyously. My darling, speak to me"—and she snatched him from Ellen, who was chafing his temples, and covered him with passionate kisses, and pressed him to her heart, as if he could catch life from thence. "Speak to me," she said imploringly to Ellen,—"tell me that he will not die! Why does not any body try to help me?—send for his father—Oh! my God, he is not here!—he is in the country, and it was I who persuaded him to go."

These words brought painful convictions to Ellen, that Edward's visit had been expected by her, and that it was to be concealed from her husband. Yet when she saw her increasing agony, as the minutes went slowly by, and

her child gave no sign of returning animation, as she listened to her prayers for mercy—such prayers as in the hour of trial will burst even from the hearts of those who have revelled in blessings, and returned no worship—she felt that her heart could not be depraved—that she, who so doated upon her children, could never contemplate forsaking their own and their father's home, and bringing down shame and disgrace upon their names.

A carriage now drove up to the door, and Ellen, in the hope that it brought medical assistance, eagerly advanced, and leant over the staircase; but she was disappointed, it was Harriet Rivers who spoke.

“Is Mr. Glanville gone?” were the first words she uttered.

Ellen again retreated to the room she had just quitted, and was almost immediately followed by Miss Rivers. Her face was colourless, and her tears fell fast, as she looked at

the fixed and death-like features of her little favourite; but she spoke words of hope and comfort to the grieving mother, and thanked Ellen, with the warmest gratitude, for the kindness she had shewn. It was very provoking that she never would appear in the same character two days together. Ellen, who in the plenitude of her dislike had settled that she was artificial and unfeeling, was quite thrown out by this natural display of emotion, which did not prevent her from thinking of every thing that was possible and proper to be done. She soothed and scolded the nurse into silence and usefulness—sent off the carriage in quest of an eminent surgeon—and despatched an express to recall Mr. Howard. Where he was gone did not appear.

“ My poor, poor aunt! what a shock this has been to her! What would she have done without you? For I imagine that you must have found her here alone?”

She waited for the answer to her question in evident trepidation—an answer by which Ellen would unconsciously convey to her much valuable information. Ellen felt that such was her reasoning, and scorned the character which at such a time could bring into play such ready artifice and presence of mind. She was now able again to dislike her very comfortably.

Ellen began to feel as if she had no business to remain there longer; but real anxiety for the surgeon's opinion induced her to linger on. It was favourable, though guarded. She waited long enough to see the child exhibit some faint signs of returning animation, and to hear the mother gasp out her gratitude and joy. She then returned home with an almost hopeless expectation that she might find that Edward had been to seek her. But she heard no tidings of him; and two days afterwards she received a letter from him, dated from the town where his regiment was stationed, compassionating himself for

leading the dullest life to which mortal man had ever been condemned, and making no mention of the small variation in it, which his journey to London might be supposed to have afforded.

Ellen began to think that there were two Edward Glanvilles in the world.

CHAPTER XVI.

She had a union of rare qualities—
A mind of manly volume—calm and clear—
Softened by feminine simplicity;
Of a free speech from very guilelessness—
A brave, confiding, loving, constant spirit.

Siege of Antwerp.

“ A solemn coxcomb, sir,
A fellow who will discourse an infinite deal of nothing.”

ELLEN felt rather uncomfortable, at having involuntarily betrayed to Lord Raymond her fears about Edward. She had determined only to converse with him so long as she could keep conversation confined to the most general topics; and now she had done something very like giving him her confidence, upon a subject of peculiar inte-

rest to her ; at least she had done the next thing to it, by begging him to keep silence on what he had seen. She was very anxious for the hour to arrive when Frederick usually paid his daily visit ; and when at last he came, she at once related to him all the events of the morning, all the reports which she had heard respecting Edward's intimacy with the Howards, and her own distrust of Harriet Rivers.

It was satisfactory to find that she *could* say all this to Frederick ; for nothing could have induced her to talk so openly to Lord Raymond, of her own opinions and sentiments. She was now very much satisfied with herself ; and what was still more to the purpose, she was very much comforted by all that Frederick said in return.

He had lost sight of the Rivers' family for some years ; but as a boy he had known them intimately. Mr. Rivers was a Liverpool merchant, and his own family property was within

a few miles of Liverpool. The Percivals had never been rich ; and when the increasing expenses of an increasing family made it impossible for them to remain longer on “ their own and their father’s land,” there had been some talk of letting their house to Mr. Rivers—it would be pleasanter than seeing it pass into the hands of a stranger. But at the very time that they finally decided to leave England, they heard of the total ruin of Mr. Rivers.

Frederick forgot the particulars; he only knew that Mr. Rivers was supposed to have behaved with the strictest honour—that the demand of every creditor was satisfied—and that he now lived with his family in a small cottage, not far from their former residence.

Frederick was about nineteen when all this happened. He was the pride and hope of his father’s life, whose final determination to reside abroad for some years, was brought about by finding that it was only by that measure he

should be enabled to meet the necessary expenses which Frederick's education at college would entail. He, as well as the rest of his family, was often with the Rivers', during this time of confusion and distress; and he then saw a great deal, and heard yet more, of Clara Seton;—for she was not then married to Mr. Howard. She had been early left an orphan, and resided almost entirely with Mr. Rivers, who was her guardian. Frederick well remembered the high terms in which Mrs. Rivers always mentioned her. His own mother too was constantly talking of her good sense, her exertions, her affection for the family who had adopted her. It seemed the most natural thing in the world that Mr. Howard, Mrs. Rivers's brother, should fall in love with her the instant he saw her, and marry her as soon as she would allow him to do so. In that part of the world he was considered a very superior kind of man, rather lively than otherwise. Our ideas of a

superior kind of man, are very much modified when we are two hundred miles from London.

Frederick thought too highly of Edward to suppose, that for his own selfish gratification he would risk destroying the happiness and respectability of such a woman, or repay Mr. Howard's kindness by such base ingratitude. He also thought so highly of Mrs. Howard, as to be certain, that if there were the slightest truth in the reports of his being in love with her, she would never allow him to be so constantly at her house. He was a little staggered when Ellen told him how positively Edward had denied that Miss Rivers was the object of his frequent visits: it was a fact which rather threw him out. He had thought it very natural that Edward should fall in love with such beauty, and be shy of owning that he was going to wed with such poverty;—that to all his other imprudences, he was about to add the most irretrievable of all—an imprudent mar-

riage ; and in this case there were family reasons, which Frederick did know, though Ellen did not, which would make such a step peculiarly injurious to Edward's future prospects. Edward, however, was not very apt to look to the future. Perhaps he thought that Lord Lindsay looked enough for both. He was mistaken there—Lord Lindsay only looked for one, and that one was himself.

Frederick was now very much puzzled to find a satisfactory reason for Edward's appearance in Park Lane ; and on the very day too that Mr. Howard was absent. He had been wondering why Ellen seemed so seriously fretted about it. The worst he foresaw was one of those hopeless, eternal attachments, which, it might be reasonably expected, a few months would put an end to. Edward would rave, and Harriet would cry ; but they could not rave and cry for ever. Harriet's family would never be mad enough to hear of such a marriage,

when they came to inquire into the state of Edward's affairs, and should find that a few fagg-ends of debts were all that he had to produce. It was at least not likely that any efforts would be made to secure him. But Mrs. Howard—if he were to commit himself there, it would be every way ruin ; and though Frederick had been proving, for the last half hour, that such a result was not possible, he felt that as the world goes, nothing unfortunately could be more so. True, Mrs. Howard was all that he had said when he knew her ; but she, who at eighteen was a sensible affectionate girl, might at twenty-five be an unhappy, unloving wife. Mr. Howard was so very fat and complacent ; and some people are really irritated by unchanging fat and complacency. And then there was Edward, generous, warm-hearted, popular, and so on. But Frederick doubted whether his notions upon some points were remarkably strict, and he might be led

on by love, perhaps by vanity, and the want of excitement still more likely, till the peace and happiness of both should be wrecked. Men do a great many foolish and wicked things themselves, and persuade others to do foolish and wicked things also, from the love of excitement. It would save a prodigious deal of crime and misery, if they would contrive to fill up their idle moments, like women, by counting threads, and passing their needles through a piece of canvass.

All these after-reflections Frederick kept to himself. He was decidedly of opinion that it was a case in which interference could do no good; so he was glad that he had made the best of it to Ellen. He could give her no new lights about Miss Rivers, she was so very young at the time of which he had been speaking. He remembered her as a beautiful petted girl of twelve or thirteen, from whom the troubles of her family were as much kept as possible; be-

cause, as her mother said, it was hard to darken so young a mind with regrets for luxuries to which she must henceforth be a stranger; or teach her to view, as one of privation, the lot to which she was destined. Frederick had been to Mrs. Howard's house several times before Ellen came to town this season; but the aunt had talked more to him than the niece; he did not think her very easy to get on with.

They were now interrupted by the entrance of Charles Dalrymple. He was certainly a most attentive brother-in-law. There was no hour of the day which Ellen felt was securely her own, he was so much in the habit of dividing them with her. When he had sat with her for an hour in the morning, she could not, without presumption, flatter herself that her Charles Dalrymple bit of the day was done; his knock at the door might again, in the afternoon, sound to her as "a dreadful note of preparation" for such another infliction. She actually fancied

there was something in his knock, quite different from any other person's knock—characteristic and tiresome. And then she resented having to pay so dearly for the calculation which induced Elizabeth to marry a man whose society bored her. She could not but suspect that when he was puzzled himself, or Elizabeth was puzzled what to do with him, she invented some message which would take him to Grosvenor Square, and give him over to Ellen for an hour or two.

She was not to flatter herself though, that she was his first object this morning. He came in quest of Frederick. He had already been to his house and had missed him; and it would have been most distressing, most embarrassing, if he had not met him now. In fact, he was walking about in the character of a legislator and a patriot. “I will talk to you presently, my dear Ellen,” he said, slightly waving her aside with his hand; “but I have a

little real business to discuss with Percival, and that I fancy will hardly be in your way.’

Ellen felt very poor and mean indeed, as, with a look of mock humility that almost made Percival laugh, she sat down to her drawing, till her brother-in-law should again think her competent to take part in the conversation.

“ You are aware,” he began, addressing himself to Frederick, “ that to-morrow the important measure will be brought forward, and I am anxious to know what is the line you mean to take.”

Frederick was exceedingly puzzled to know what was the important measure to which he alluded,—Reform—Slavery—Irish Church—English Church,—all these words ran rapidly through his brain; but these were questions that were either settled or unsettled to the country’s satisfaction: some said the first—some the last. There will be different opinions about every thing; and they can all be proved

to be right and wrong. Frederick would have a speech to make upon a pet little measure of his own, which he was rather anxious that Ellen should hear; but he did not suspect Mr. Dalrymple of knowing any thing about that. He cast a distressed look towards Ellen, which she only answered by a shake of her head; for she had no information to give.

“ I am ashamed to confess,” said Frederick at last, “ that I do not know what is the measure to which you allude.”

“ Good heavens! how extraordinary! is it possible that you are not aware that it comes on to-night? Surely the fact was mentioned in the three letters and most of the printed papers I sent.”

“ It!—what? you really must be a little more explicit,” Frederick said, growing impatient; for he began to recollect that his minutes were too precious to throw away. He had forgotten that while he talked to Ellen, and perhaps it might

not have struck him now, if Charles had not been standing exactly between her and him.

“ You surely received my letters!—you surely read the papers!—you examined the little map?” asked Charles in a tone of increasing anxiety; “ your view of the subject cannot be different from mine?”

That Charles had any view upon any subject, it yet remained for Frederick to discover; but the little map threw a ray of light upon the business.

“ Oh! the petition about the rail-road, which is likely to pass through your Linden property,—that is presented to-night, is it?”

“ It has nothing on earth to do with the Linden property. In my second statement, I particularly mentioned that it was the Rankin farms which were likely to be injured. However, we will say no more on the subject,” Charles answered, while his thin lips grew thinner, and his whity-brown complexion turned

whity red. "It seems to me that this business does not come within your powers; it requires great nicety of mind to take in the details. I had ventured to hope, that as a friend of the family, you would have exerted yourself to understand what so nearly concerns its interests. Perhaps it will be better to leave the whole affair in the hands of Mr. Trevor, our county member. I have been with him every day for the last fortnight, and he told me, yesterday, that he saw no necessity for hearing more on the subject; so he is prepared."

"Yes," Frederick said, "it would perhaps be better to leave it with him;" but he apprehended little more would pass than ordering the petition to lie on the table.

"Pardon me; you seem not to be aware of the importance of the business. My bailiff, who lives within two miles of my own residence, would actually hear the noise of the train of carriages, if he were to sit with his windows

open. But let us talk about other things.— Ellen, is the basket you are painting in the boy's hand, full of oranges, or apples?"

It was now Frederick's turn to be set aside. Indeed Charles's opinion of his talents was considerably shaken. It was but natural to make the change; so he ran on with a string of questions to Ellen, and took no more notice of Frederick than if he had not been in the room. Ellen did not feel the distinction quite as gratefully as she ought.

Before he took leave, Frederick asked whether there would be any chance of her coming to the ventilator the next day—he thought it likely to be rather an amusing night; "to say nothing," he added with a smile, "of the family interest which will come under discussion."

This mollified Charles; it was impossible he could guess that Frederick simply felt he should speak well, and wished Ellen to hear him.

There are other people in the world, cleverer than Charles Dalrymple, who habitually fancy that others speak from their motives, and act for their interests. It is not an unpleasant delusion, but a delusion it almost always is.

“I have already,” Charles said, “taken measures to obtain an order for Lady Elizabeth, finding that my mother apprehends no evil from the exertion, if her stay is not prolonged. I make no doubt of my success, as I understand that Mr. S—— is very particular about giving them to all those immediately interested in what is going on.”

Ellen at once acceded to Frederick's wish. Lord Mordaunt would again have pronounced her a keen politician ; but she had her own suspicions that she was rather bored than otherwise in the dark roof of the House of Commons, —her head poked through a hole, breathing bad air, with women talking violent nonsense beside her, and men talking violent sense beneath. Still it was a satisfaction to her to go

anywhere, where Frederick must be her first and only object. Perhaps she felt that it was a right preparation for undertaking, what Elizabeth called, the miserable situation of a politician's wife.

A loud knock was now heard at the door, and Frederick made his escape.

"It has struck four," said Ellen, trying to quiet her brother-in-law's nerves, for he looked fidgetty; "and I told them to let in nobody after that, as I have persuaded papa to take a drive with me."

Charles, who had stolen stealthily to the window to reconnoitre, ran nimbly towards the bell, and pulled it with energy. "It is Lady Hamilton, Ellen. Of course you do not wish her to be denied. If the porter has any sense, he will guess that ring meant something. No—the foolish fellow has sent her away. What idiots servants are, always doing just what they are told, and your carriage waiting there!

She must have known you were at home." He turned round, looking so seriously distressed that Ellen, though half laughing, and half provoked at not being allowed to manage her own visitors, did her best to comfort him.

"She is the last person likely to mind ; she knows that papa often drives at this hour, and that I never keep him waiting."

"Oh ! of course. Lady Elizabeth would do the same thing in such a case. Lady Elizabeth would not stand more in awe of Lady Hamilton than you do. But you know she only sent her card to our house instead of calling, and I should have been glad of an opportunity to let fall in conversation, that Lady Elizabeth had herself been at her door. If you had considered a little, Ellen, you would have remembered that I wished to meet Lady Hamilton. It would be just as easy for her to call in Brook-street as here."

Ellen had no time to settle whether it would

be easy or difficult for Lady Hamilton to call in Brook-street ; though judging from Charles's statement, it was the last. He now looked very much discomposed, and shewed no intention of moving ; so Ellen's drive with Lord Mordaunt was evidently considered of no consequence.

By way of making a graceful retreat, she said that she must treat him as she had treated Lady Hamilton, and not allow him to make her late. She could not have said a more flattering thing ; his self-complacency was immediately restored ; he gave Lord Mordaunt his arm to the carriage, handed Ellen into it, and having ascertained that they were only going to drive in the park, he stepped into it himself, allaying any fears Ellen might have entertained for his dignity and comfort, by assuring her, that he did not the least mind sitting backwards. It was a sad blow to the comfort of both father and daughter ; but Lord Mordaunt leant back with his eyes shut, and left Ellen,

like a devoted daughter as she was, to receive the constant volley of small questions and remarks that Charles fired across. She really felt indignant when Elizabeth kissed her hand to them, as she returned from her comfortable solitary drive.

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